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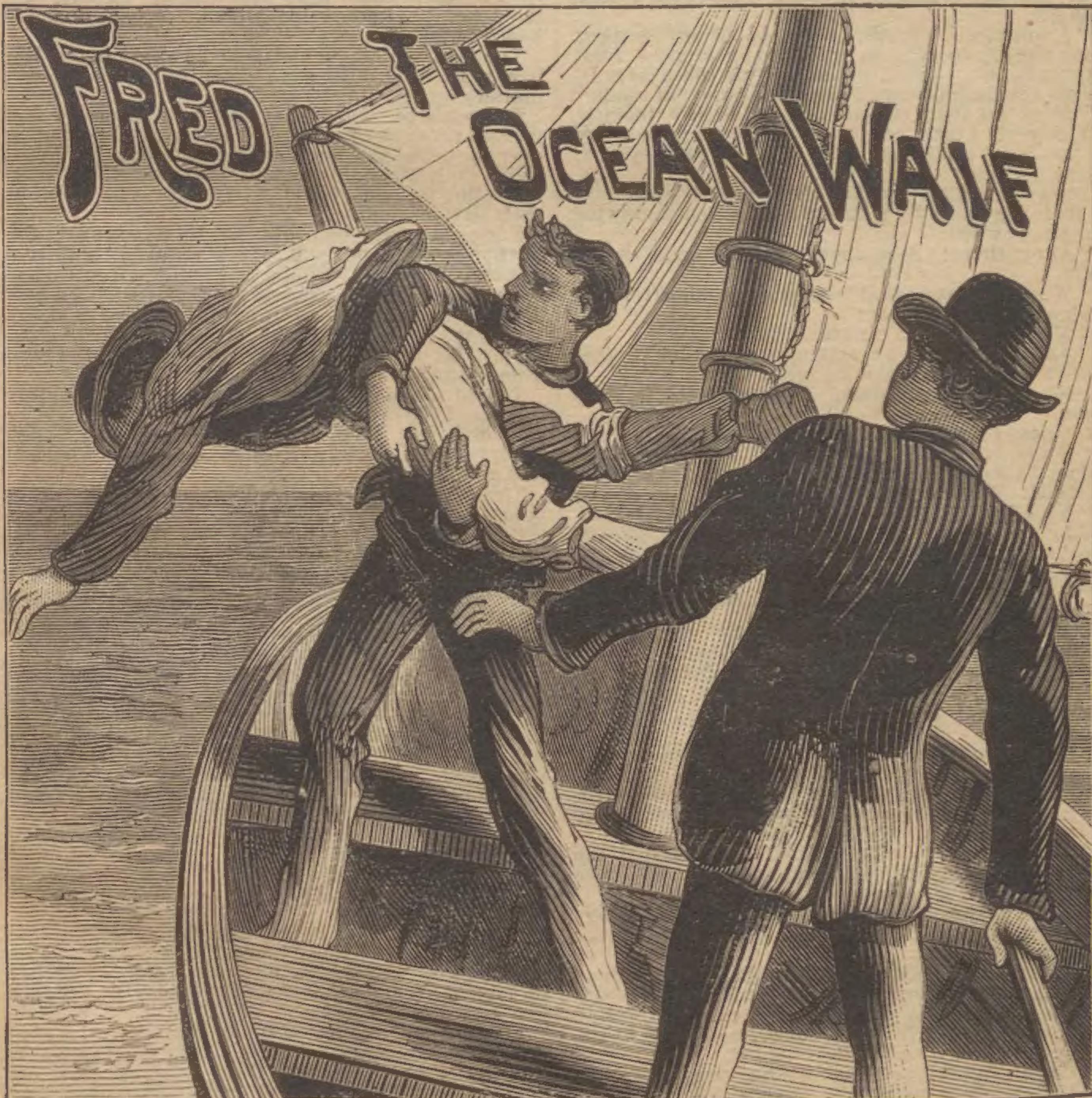
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WITH A SUDDEN PECULIAR LIFT FRED HURLED THE FISHERMAN HEADLONG OVER THE SIDE OF THE BOAT INTO THE WATERS OF THE INLET.

Fred, the Ocean Waif;

OR,

THE OLD SAILOR'S PROTEGE.

BY CHARLES MORRIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE GAMIN DETECTIVE," "THE BOSS BOY,"
"BILLY BAGGAGE," "PICAYUNE PETE," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A LONG CHASE.

"THEM fellers is ridic'lously risky," growled an old waterman, who stood at the water-line, on the Beach City coast, looking seaward. "Did ye twig 'em, Joe? Why, their keel hardly cleared the shal-lers. And with a fresh puff of air like this! They moughtn't find it so comfor'ble, if they got sand-logged."

"I didn't sight 'em," replied the man addressed as Joe. "I was lookin' south'ard. What sort o' craft was it?"

"A full-rigged barque," returned the first speaker. "It's the Fly-by-Nights, or I'm an old sinner! Look hereaway, boy—here, to the west of the p'int! Do ye see the flash of oars under that bunc' of reeds?"

"Nary an oar," declared Joe, intently looking. "Yes yes! I twig 'em now! But where the blazes is the coast-guarders? Got sand in their eyes, as usual, I s'pose!"

They were interrupted by the swash of oars almost at their feet, and by a hail in a loud and somewhat imperious voice:

"Ahoi, there! Seen anything stirring on the inlet?"

"What ye lookin' fur?" asked Jack, shortly. "A crab or a double-decker?"

"A boat. Likely a six-oared barge."

"And d'y'e spose ye'r talkin' to a land-lubber that ye can't say barge when ye mean barge?"

"It's the coast-guarders," announced Joe, in a low tone.

"S'pose I don't know?" growled Jack.

"Come, come, Jack Sreat, if it's you!" cried the voice; "there's no use standin' on your ear about nothing. Whereaway are they?"

"Ye'll find 'em round the p'int of Turtle Island, pullin' like sin to the inlet. They've good ten minutes' start of you. Lay to yer oars, or ye may sell out yer caps fer a song!"

"Give way!" cried the voice from the boat. "With a will, boys!"

The two old watermen watched the boat as it cut like an arrow through the rippling waters.

"Hope they'll overhaul the confounded sea-thieves; but I've my doubts," remarked Jack, with a wise shake of his gray hairs. "Hadn't we best turn in?"

"I could bunk on a pine plank in comfort," rejoined Joe. "I'm sinful sleepy!"

While they slowly turned their steps homeward, the pursuing boat was making rapid headway up the narrowing inlet.

"Hug the shore closer, Fred," commanded the stroke oarsman. "The moon is rising over the reeds. Do you see anything?"

"Yes," answered the youthful figure at the tiller. "They've just ruffled the moonlight around the sharp turn ahead."

They were now nearly a mile within the mouth of the inlet. They rowed on for ten minutes more under the shadow of the reeds. Suddenly the bow of the boat swept out from the shore line with a broad surge, and headed across the channel.

"Hallo! What's up?" asked the former speaker.

"They've smelt us out," responded Fred. "They haven't a quarter of a mile the start, and are head-ing sharp for Leather Channel. Lay to your oars lively. They won't have much the best of us on an angle."

The difference between the two lines, from the island shore to the inland channel, was not so great but that hard rowing might overcome it. Both boats shot rapidly forward, the men pulling with a will.

"How goes the chase now, Fred?"

"They haven't a pine-tree's length the start. They'll beat us to the channel, but I'll bet a cow we overhaul them before they are far in. Stoop, lads! Quick! The hounds are going to fire!"

His sharp warning was instantly obeyed. A loud report rung through the silent night. An oar, struck by a musket-ball, was wrench'd from the hand of one of the rowers and hurled into the water.

A laugh of derision arose as the head of the fugitive boat shot into Lea her Channel, while the pur-suer swung head round toward the shore.

At the same instant a lithe form ran like a squirrel along the gunwale of the coast-guard boat, and sprung lightly ashore from the bow. It was Fred Halyard, the youthful helmsman.

"I'll track them over the marsh," he said, in a low tone. "I know it like a book. A bent reed will be the signal."

The next minute he had darted away, running low like a lapwing. He soon disappeared in the long marsh grasses.

The scene on which they had now entered was a perfect network of interlaced waterways, spreading over the broad salt marsh as intricately as a spider's web. Only intimate acquaintance with these inter-threading streams could enable any one to follow their devious course.

For over a mile the boat made its way inward, following Fred's bent reeds, which regularly appeared at every branch in the inlets. Finally, after following a longer stretch than usual, they reached a new divide, but there was no trace of the signal reed.

"That's deuced awkward," cried the stroke oars-man. "Is there something wrong with the boy? Jump ashore and look."

Two of the men obeyed the order, and minutely inspected the ground.

"There has been some heavy trampling," they observed. "It looks as if Fred had been ambushed and gobbed up."

The reeds were trampled into the mud, as if a sharp struggle had taken place.

"He's gone, sure enough," was the general deci-sion. "It's a bad business. It will be odd if we don't catch rats from old Tom for losing the boy."

The search was continued through the exasperat-ing channels for a full hour, but uselessly.

Meantime Fred had been diligently making his way over the miry and slippery surface of the marsh, now stumbling in some muddy pool, now rending through tangled grasses, but always man-aging to sight the boat at every divide in the channels.

As he reached the point at which the pursuers had been baffled, he lost sight, for some distance, of the chase. Hurrying forward rapidly through the tall grass that impeded his way, he stumbled and fell over some obstruction in his path.

He rose quickly, but what was his surprise to find himself surrounded by four stalwart men, who seemed to him to have emerged from the ground. He had evidently fallen into the center of an am-bush.

"Well, little one, don't you think you've had enough fun of this kind?" asked one of them, as he grasped Fred's arm with an iron clutch. "Tain't no joke, travelin' afoot through the ma'sh. S'pose you take a boat-ride with us?"

"Dunno but maybe it would be nicer," drawled Fred, with an assumed ease. "Ma'sh travelin' is tiresome work, that's so. Been doing my prettiest to catch up with you, and get a lift aboard your boat."

"Well, I'll be blowed!" cried one of the men, with a hoarse laugh. "If he ain't a cool young chicken, sell me out!"

"Stir up! There's no time to lose," commanded the first speaker. "They're close on our trail. Step along here, my lit'l hound. We'll find you a kennel."

But he had for an instant loosened his grasp on Fred's arm. The alert lad made a quick, unlooked-for spring, tearing himself away, and, ere they could prevent him, leaped headlong into the water.

If he could but gain the other side, and hide under the shelter of its border of marsh-grass, he might be safe until his friends came up.

But the others were too quick for him. The boat shot out from the side of the inlet, where it had lain concealed. The quick-swimming boy had scarce reached the center of the stream when he was grasped by the shoulders, and lifted, as by the strength of a giant, bodily into the boat.

"Blast his eyes! Hadn't we best knock the water-rat in the head, and be done with it?" growled the rough voice of the captor.

"Don't parley with him," cried the leader, from the bank. "We're losing time here. Tie him, Jack. And set the boat's head in. We must be off."

Fred would have hazarded another observation, in the hope of gaining time. But his effort to speak was rudely cut short by a rough gag that was forced into his mouth. In the next minute, tied hands and feet, he was flung lengthwise in the bottom of the boat, a tarpaulin thrown over his face effectually blinding him, and destroying any hopes which he might have had of observing the course of the boat.

He had only his ears left to aid him, but he made most effectual use of them, as will hereafter appear.

"It will be odd if I don't work a triangulation on them yet," he thought. "I haven't carried a chain in the Coast Survey for nothing."

The boat at length came to rest. The clank of a chain was heard, as though it were being fastened. The next moment the boy was lifted out and laid on what seemed hard ground. A dry, warm air had replaced the cool air of the marsh.

A confused bustle ensued. Then a door was loudly slammed, and Fred was left alone in gloom and silence.

CHAPTER II.

STRANDED IN THE MARSH.

FRED HALYARD was not the person to remain long in a state of inactivity while any power of motion remained to him. Bound hand and foot as he was, and with the rude gag still in his mouth, he was able to roll, and thus to get rid of the blinding mass that covered his eyes.

But the change proved of no essential advantage, for the darkness remained as dense as before. He was evidently in some inclosed space, which the light of the moon was unable to penetrate. And a low, lapping sound of water met his ears, seeming to show that a branch of the inlet penetrated to this place.

Yet, as soon as his eyes grew somewhat accustomed to the darkness, he was able to make out the outlines of a long, narrow room, from one side of which came a faint gleam of light. It seemed to pass through a narrow crack at the bottom of a door.

Fred was instantly seized with an anxious desire to learn what was going on beyond this door. It must have been through this that his captors had passed, and there might be a key-hole, or opening of some sort, which would reveal to him the secret of their mysterious operations.

His first thought was to break the bonds by which his limbs were fastened. His efforts, unfortunately, proved in vain. He had been tied too firmly for any such easy escape.

In another direction he was more successful. The gag had been shifted by his uneasy movements, until it was now very painful to him. But he had felt a hard inequality in the floor, possibly an obtruding spike-head. By continued efforts he managed to

work himself down so as to bring his mouth opposite this, and by degrees succeeded in removing the painful obstruction, which had been wedged in between his teeth.

It was slow progress, but the distance, fortunately, was not great. As he drew near the door the sound of voices grew plainly distinguishable. And now loud bursts of laughter rose, and a clinking sound, as of glasses or earthen cups.

There was but the one point through which the light came—the crack at the bottom of the door. Fred soon satisfied himself of this, and then applied his eyes to the narrow opening.

There was but one clearly distinguishable object in sight. This was a large, tiger-like white cat, spotted on paws and tail with black, which purred and rubbed its head against the foot of one of the men.

This person lowered his hand to stroke the animal. Fred's sharp eyes caught the physiognomy of this hand almost as distinctly as if he had seen a face. It was a short, sinewy hand, with stumpy fingers, and broad, flat nails. In color it was as dark as mahogany, and splotched with reddish spots. On the little finger was a thick gold ring, with a greenish stone, possibly an emerald.

"A white cat and a sunburnt hand," cogitated Fred. "That ain't much, but it's something. When it's nip or tuck every item counts. And there's three knots in a row on that washboard. Guess I'll know this room again."

"Once more, Cap," came a voice from the room. "Here's success to the jolly flyers and confusion to the customs; and may the foul fiend sink their boat and singe their whiskers. Drink deep, lads! he's a traitor that leaves a heel-tap!"

The clink of cups was again heard, and then a voice which Fred recognized as that of one of the boatmen.

"We must be going now. Daylight must see us on deck again."

"And what's to be done with the brat inside there?"

"Don't puzzle your wise head about him. We'll settle with him."

The men had risen. He could see their feet moving about the floor. The listener, fearful of being caught in his present position, hastily rolled away as the ready mode of escape. Unluckily his effort in this direction did not prove as successful as he had hoped. He suddenly felt as if the floor was giving way beneath him, and, with a noisy splash, he tumbled headlong into the stream of water in which the boat had entered that enclosure.

It was a dangerous experiment, bound as he was. But Fred had enough of the cat about him to light on his feet, and as the surface of the water only reached his breast, he was safe from drowning, at all events.

The door was hastily flung open, and the men came rushing into the room where they had left their captive.

"What the blazes is up here? Where are you, boy?" shouted the foremost.

"Here! Up to my neck in water. Taking a cooling off," explained Fred. "It's so confounded hot above there."

A laugh followed his remark, given, as it was, with inimitable *sang froid*.

"He's got the gag from his mouth, Cap," said the man who had spoken first.

"You needn't gag him again," said the leader, "except he sets that tongue wagging."

How they got out of that place into the open air again Fred could not conjecture, though he heard a suspicious creaking noise as if something besides the boat had moved.

In a minute more he knew by the fresh coolness of the air that they were outside. In complete silence the oarsmen rowed on. For a period that might have been fifteen minutes and might have been an hour, for all that the captive's gauge of time could have decided, this progress continued.

At the end of that time the boat stopped, and seemed to rub against the bank of the water-course.

"Land him here," said the voice of Cap. "We don't care a fig for what he knows, for he is as ignorant of where he has been as that bat. But let me tell you one thing, boy. If you get into my hands in this way again you won't get out so easy. And you may thank your lucky stars that you are out of it with a whole skin this time."

Fred was left blinded and bound on the grass, while the boat shot swiftly off. It was no very agreeable position, in the midst of those winding channels, and in that muddy, oozy marsh, from which it might have been difficult for a man with the free use of his limbs and his senses to escape.

Perhaps his captors hoped, in leaving him there bound and blindfolded, that he would be drowned without any direct effort on their part. But if they thought so they did not know Fred Halyard.

"Anyhow I've got my legs," thought Fred. "But I'd give a pint of chestnuts for my eyes. And two quarts of huckleberries for my hands."

He rose to his feet, which had now recovered their strength, and felt as well as he could about the locality.

"I've got to make a bee-line to the south'ard, or I'm a gone rooster," he ruminated. "A fellow might roam round here in a circle for the next ten years, and come out where he started."

Fred walked slowly onward, feeling his way with a precaution unusual with him.

After some two hours of this slow progress, he was overjoyed to perceive, even through his bandage, a greater degree of light toward the left than toward the right hand.

"Day's breaking, for sure," he cried, with a loud "hallo!" of satisfaction. "And I've got the sun on my left cheek. I'm in the right road, that's certain."

He paused, for a distant sound had come to his ear. A moment satisfied him that it was the noise of wheels, rapidly approaching.

"Hallo, there!" he yelled with delight. "Ain't you going to help a—"

His appeal came suddenly to a close. In his joy he had become careless of his footsteps, and now plunged headlong into another branch of the inlet, cutting his sentence short in the middle.

The stream was unusually wide, and poor Fred's strength was rapidly going. He struggled manfully, with all the energy of despair, but it seemed to him as if the further shore would never be reached.

He made one more strenuous effort, and then his head slowly sank under water—his strength quite exhausted.

And now, a moment too late, the rattle of wheels sounded on the causeway beside this fatal stream.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT THE WRECK BROUGHT OLD TOM.

The sun rose clear and warm on the morning succeeding to the night of the events just related. Its bright beams fell alike on the salt marsh, with its plexus of water-channels, in one of which poor Fred Halyard had sunk; and on the roofs and streets of Beach City, just awakening to the pleasures of a new day.

Folks were already on the sands, enjoying the fresh air of the early morning. Of these some were tourists, who had no fancy to waste the best hours of their sea-shore trip in sleep; others were inhabitants of the city, accustomed to early rising, or with business abroad at that hour.

Among the latter was a hale, strongly-built old man, who was seated on the gunwale of a life-boat, that lay, ready for use, on the beach.

The old man's eyes were fixed on the sea, sweeping the horizon with the telescopic glance of an old "lookout," and noting distinct features in the distant water-line where all would have been blank space to a landsman.

"Any sail in the offing?" came a voice at his elbow.

"Ay, ay!" answered the old salt, without turning his eyes. "There's a steamer, hull-down, off there to the east'ard; and a light spray of sail hereaway, headin' south."

"But, how can you make out a steamer when she is hull-down? Is she under sail?"

"It'd be hard enough to miss her," returned the old man, with a low laugh. "That is for a sea-dog like me, that's been on the lookout aloft for many a long hour. D'ye see the patch o' blue mist on the sky, this side the sun? That's smoke. And it don't come from no old woman's kitchen-fire, nei'her. That line of smoke has been trailed across the broad Atlant'ic, if I ain't badly mistaken."

He slowly turned his eyes, to observe with whom he had been speaking. There stood before him a white-haired gentleman, of apparently his own age, but fashionably dressed, and supporting his steps upon a gold-headed cane. He presented a strong contrast in appearance and in his handsome face and clear complexion, to the old tar.

By his side was a young lady a bright-faced, beautiful girl, with warm, earnest blue eyes, and a mouth in which the strong lines of that of the gentleman were softened into feminine grace and beauty.

"Glad to see you out so 'arly this mornin', Mr. Darlington," said the old man, with a nod of the head. "And my little May Rose too."

"You never have any great storms here Mr. Halyard?" asked the young lady.

"You should run down here in the winter, now an' then, Miss Rose, if you'd like to see old ocean fairly waked up. I wouldn't like you to see the sights this quiet beach has known, Miss Rose. Nor you neither, Mr. Darlington. D'ye see them old ribs?"

He pointed to the broken skeleton of a ship, the ends of whose worn timbers barely showed themselves above the surface of the sands.

"Another summer and you will not see a trace of that craft, and there will be few left to remember it but we old water-dogs who saw it come ashore."

The old man's voice fell, and he shook his head sorrowfully as if he was mourning the death of a friend.

"You saw it wrecked?" exclaimed Rose, eagerly. "You, Mr. Halyard? Then I want you to tell me all about it!"

She seated herself beside him and laid her soft hand, in her earnestness, on his horny paw.

"Yes, my May Rose," he replied, his rough face softening. "I'd be the last one to forget it. That old wreck brung me the greatest treasure of my life."

"Oh, now you shall tell me the story of the wreck!" she cried. "For I know that there must be some interesting story."

"It was fifteen years ago last winter," he commenced. "We'd had nor'-west gales for a week, off and on. Sich as are likely to come in January. There had been more than one wreck up and down the coast, but our beach here had somehow 'scaped. One night—after midnight it was—the winds rose to a perfect hurricane. I never see'd a wuss blow in the West Indies. And you'd thought the whole sea was jist comin' as'ore, the way it pounded and roared. There weren't many souls abed, you can be sure. I was standin' jist back of where we are now—couldn't have stood here, for this was the sea's acre, and it was giving warnin' 'gains' trespassers. Well, it mought have been five hours arter midnight when we heard a gun to windward—the dismallest sound mortal ears ever heered in a storm like that."

"Everybody was in a stew in a minute. There weren't as many folks here in them days as now, for Beach City wasn't a summering place then. But there was enough of us Jerseymen to be anxious. Well, that gun kept poundin' 'way out to sea at first, but gettin' closer. And it were so dark you couldn't have seen lightnin', let alone the ship. The

poor doomed critter fought hard for her life. She fought the storm for two mortal hours; but the gun-shots come closer and closer; and when daylight lit up the east we cau ht a glimpse of her.

"It was a fair sized three-master, English rigged, though she hardly spread a rag of sail. Jist one look settled her hash. She hadn't as much chance for life as a butterfly in a hurricane. And as for launching a lifeboat, you mought as well have tried to go to sea in a tub. She st.uck almost the fu'st minute we spied her."

"They launched their boats; but no boat ever lived in sich a sea. They stove like pipe-stems. And it was hardly ten minutes afore the ship bro'e amidships. I'd have liked then to be twenty miles away, for it was a sorrowful business to have to stand there with your hands tied and see sich a noble craft go to pieces, and so many living souls sink to Davy Jones's locker. But there weren't no help for it.

"But they were not all lost?" asked Rose, with tears in her eyes. "Don't say they were all lost."

"A l but two," he replied, solemnly. "One was a sailor, who was dragged, half-dead, from the sur". And he was so battered by the waves that it pound-ed all the senses out of him. When he come to every speck of his memory was gone. And we've never knowed from that day to this the name of that ship, for the ocean didn't leave a thing that she could be told by.

"The other was my treasure. The waves tossed it nearly ashore—something like a baby's cradle. It just suckind it back ag'in when I tumbled into the surf like a boy. You mought have s'posed that I didn't know nothin' about water the way I risked myself. And all for a baby's cradle."

"In I jumped and grabbed the cradle. And Jack Sprat, one of our neighbors here, grabbed me. And somebody grabbed Jack Sprat. And if they hadn't pulled hard I wouldn't have been about to tell you this yarn to-day."

"But you saved the cradle? And there was something in it?" cried Rose, breathlessly.

"The prettiest boy baby that ever you sot eyes on. And he's alive to-day, Heaven be thanked, and there ain't his equal in all the Jerseys. And that's what the wreck brought to old Tom Halyard."

"But you say that the boy is living yet," demanded Rose. "It isn't—"

"Yes, it is. It is Fred Halyard—my own son by adoption from the sea, and the nattiest, handsomest, sharpest, and best-hearted boy that ever knotted a rope or faced a nor'wester."

"And it's a mighty bad business, old Tom," spoke a voice behind him.

"What's that?" cried the old man, sharply turning.

"Only that Fred's among the missing," returned the speaker, a stalwart young man, dressed in a waterman's garb. "We gave chase last night to a boat-load of smugglers, and took Fred as helmsman. The hounds flung us in the inlets, and Fred jumped ashore to follow them afoot—and—"

"And what?" cried the old man, leaping up and seizi ng him by the collar. "Don't say that any man's come to the boy, or I'll throttle ye!"

There was an agony in the old sailor's look, and a deep intensity of tone, that showed he meant this for no idle threat.

"We lost him, that was all. We hunted him fur an hour, but he was not to be found. And now here's daylight and no Fred. I'm afeard the confounded smugglers have gobbed him up."

"And what are you standing here for?" cried old Tom, sending the man staggering away with a thrust of his vigorous arm. "Why ain't you out in the inlet arter him? If he's harmed I won't forget you soon. Come—there ain't no time to stand here driveling."

The old man darted away with the speed of a racer, followed by the coast-guard boatman, leaving Mr. Darlington and his daughter scarcely less excited and surprised.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MILKMAN'S PRIZE.

ROSE DARLINGTON and her father walked slowly together up the beach, aft r the hasty departure of old Tom Halyard.

"It will be too dreadful if anything serious has happened," she said, with clasped hands. "After his being saved from the sea, too, in such a way; and no one to : now anything about him, except that he is a gentleman's child. And the only person who was saved with him to have quite lost his memory. What makes you look so strange, papa?"

"Why, did I look strange?" asked Mr. Darlington, with a slight start. "I must have been deeply interested in your r. mance, indeed. That sailor may have recovered his memory!"

This was said in an aside, as if he had forgotten his daughter's presence.

"Oh! and you are going to seek him, and find out all about Fred Halyard! Now, that's a dear, good papa! I am so glad of that!"

"I do not know but that old Tom has the best right to him, even if his real father could be found," mused Mr. Darlington.

Meanwhile old Tom and his companion had reach-ed the causeway leading across the marsh. A wagon here came briskly along, whose high tin cans showed that it belonged to a vendor of milk. The milk-man, a plain-featured countryman, stopped his hor e as they approached.

"Hallo! old Tom!" he ejaculated. "In a hurry for milk this mornin'? Couldn't wait till I got inter town?"

"I am not after you," cried the old man, hastily, as he ran on.

"Then you're arter somethin' in a desp'rate hur-ry. Now jest pull up and tell me what's lost. Mebbe I can help you a trifle."

"Have you seen anything in the marsh?" demand ed old Tom breathlessly.

"I've seen many a thing, from a bullfrog to a bit-tern," returned the countryman. "An' I guesses I know what you want. It's the boy Fred you're racing after, ain't it now?"

"Sartain it is. You've seen him? Where is he?" The old man's voice had all the impetuosity of youth.

"If you holler so you'll wake the lad. You'll find him here back in the wagon. And, bless his honest face, he's fast asleep. Don't rouse him," he continued, as old Tom hastily sprung up onto the shaft. "I calkerlate the lad's jest tuckered out, and we'd best let him have his nap through."

He proceeded to tell how, while driving along the causeway, he had heard a loud hallo, and seen a tall figure standing on the bank of the inlet that bordered the road. The next moment this person had fallen into the water, and seemed to be making a desperate struggle to swim across.

"The poor creature sunk more than once," con-tinued the milkman. "So I jest jumped out of the wagon, and when he riz ag'in I had him by the collar quick as a flash, and out on the bank. Bless your eyes, it wasn't a spark of wonder he couldn't swim, fer he was blinded by a big cloth, and had his hands tied behind him. Salt wouldn't have saved him if Tony Lumkin hadn't been on hand."

They had now gained the beach, where they met Mr. Darlington and his daughter, who stood waiting in intense expectancy.

"Is he safe? Have you found him?" demanded Rose, too deeply excited to wait for some of the others to speak.

The reply came from an unexpected quarter. A voice sounded from the rear of the wagon:

"Safe! I guess so. Let me out, Tony."

And a tall, lithe figure leaped lightly from the ve-hicle. They hardly knew him at first, with the wet hair streaming down over his face. His clothes were covered with mud, with which his face was also thickly streaked.

"I am all right, father," he cried warmly clas-

ing the old man's hand. "And whom have we here? Ah! Mr. Darlington and Miss Rose. I hope you will excuse my looks. I have had a hard night of it."

"You have had a serious time of it, Fred," remarked Mr. Darlington.

"Yes," returned the boy, indifferently. "Some folks might not like it."

"See here, Fred Halyard," exclaimed the old man, whose excitement had to find vent in some direction, "don't you go playin' innocent in that rascally provokin' way. I don't want no puttin' on airs."

Rose looked as if she indorsed Mr. Halyard's opinion, and Fred felt somewhat abashed, as he caught the expression of her speaking eye.

"Of course I am really to tell all I know," he replied. "But it is a long story, and I am not too fresh. Hadn't we best go up to the house?"

"Sartain! sartain!" and the old man seized Fred's arm, "Poor boy! I'm afeard you've had a siege. Come on, folks; we'll jest step up and take cheers, and hear what the lad has to say in comfort."

They were now joined by Mr. Proctor, the officer of the customs, who had but lately heard of the preceding night's adventure, and was anxious to learn the boy's story.

And Fred gave it to them, in all its details. He found it not unpleasant to be lionized, and made the most of the exciting story of his adventures.

"But have you any idea where the locality is?" asked Mr. Proctor. "Can we trace the hiding place of the smugglers?"

"I have an idea," replied Fred.

"Good for you, boy. Where is the place?"

"I'll tell you when I fin' out," was the quiet answer. "I've got to work my traverse first. If it's all right we've got them. If it's all wrong we ain't. And that's all I've got to say now."

And he meant it, for no questioning could bring anything further from him on the subject.

CHAPTER V.

RESCUED FROM THE SEA.

ABOUT ten o'clock the next morning Fred Halyard was walking briskly through one of the side streets of the town. He was dressed in a suit of blue flannel, which would answer very well for a bathing-dress, and looked as if it had done duty in that direction already.

Turning a corner he found himself suddenly face to face with Ross Darlington. She was accompanied by a young gentleman, a well-dressed, good-looking, but supercilious personage, whose eyes fixed themselves on Fred with the look that an earl might give to a herdsmen.

"Mr. Halyard!" exclaimed Rose, stopping in her walk. "Then you have entirely recovered? I am glad to see that."

"I thank you for your interest," he replied. "I am none the worse for my adventure."

He caught the eye of Rose's gentleman friend as he spoke. It was fixed upon him with an expression which Fred did not relish. A quick gleam shot into his eyes, and he flashed a glance of defiance on that young gentleman, which made him lower his gaze.

Fred walked on, with a parting bow to his fair friend, but with heightened color.

We will not follow Fred foot by foot. He was in search of the spot in the marsh at which the boatmen had left him. He finally discovered it, tracing back his own tracks through the mud.

Along the distant shore of the mainland ran a ridge, that was dotted at frequent intervals with houses. Fred gazed at them intently.

"I'd wager a fortune I could pick out a half-dozen houses that would have our game among them. But it wouldn't be square to search an honest farmer's house for smuggled goods. We will have to take to the boats and measure my lines."

He turned and began to make his way back to the causeway.

About the same time Mr. Darlington and old Tom were walking slowly down toward the beach.

"S'pose we'd find that the boy had a mint of money," exclaimed the old man, "d'ye think I'd go for that? Would it make him an ace the happier? He's got good looks and good health, and good education."

"But it is our duty to find his parents, if possible?"

"He ain't got no parent 'cept old Tom Halyard," cried the old sailor, angrily.

"So far as I can see, there seems to be no chance of discovering them."

"Jim Bendy, the sailor as was saved with Fred, has got the whole story laid away somewhere in his brain. But his memory is clean gone. He's got to learn everything new, like a new-born baby."

"Has he taken to the sea again?"

"No. He keeps an ale-house at Crockettstown, between here and Philadelphia. He's learned enough to measure out a glass of ale."

It was now the bathing hour, and the beach was at its liveliest. Hundreds were in the line of the surf, being tossed like chips on the surging waters, or buried beneath some wave of unusual height.

Suddenly there came a change in the spirit of fun that prevailed. People looked at each other, and then out to the sea, with dilated eyes. Their gaze was concentrated on one point.

"By all that's bad, they've been caught in the undertow!" exclaimed old Tom, pointing to two figures visible beyond the line of bathers, and seemingly struggling with the overpowering waters.

One of them was further in than the other, and was swimming manfully. The other was floating helplessly outward.

"Merciful heavens! it cannot be Rose!" cried Mr. Darlington, in a voice full of agony, and staggering backward as if he had received a heavy blow.

His cry was echoed by a voice behind him, and an agile figure darted like lightning down the beach.

"Keep up, Mr. Darlington," cried old Tom. "There goes my Fred. He'll bring her ashore if there's a ghost of a show."

It was indeed Fred Halyard, who had just returned from the marsh. In a moment he had plunged through the surf, and was battling with the waves. All eyes eagerly followed him as he swam gallantly outward. He was rapidly approaching the struggling girl, calling to her cheeringly.

But a groan arose from all observers as a wave dashed over her, and she sunk out of sight. Fred was not ten feet away. One strong stroke more, and he too disappeared beneath the waters.

The moment of terrible suspense was succeeded by a glad shout. The swimmer had risen again to the surface, bearing with him the girlish form of the bather.

Fortunately for Fred she did not struggle. Arranging her with her hands on his shoulders he swam inward, with an easy but strong stroke. In, in he came. And now a breaker aided, dashing him far inward. Catching his light freight in his arms, he let his feet fall. He was within easy touching distance of the bottom. In a minute more he had dashed forward into shallow water.

The companion of the rescued lady had just reached the shore. He stood shame-faced under the scornful looks that were cast upon him. It was the young gentleman with whom Fred had met her that morning.

Rose turned, with a wan smile upon her face, and held out her hand.

"Thank you!" was all she could say.

"There, there! not another word," murmured Fred, clasping the diminutive hand in an earnest pressure.

"You'd best both get away from here," advised old Tom. "Here comes the locusts, and they'll eat the lad alive if they can't get at the lady."

They took his advice, and there was a hasty retreat from the coming throng of bathers.

Rose's dejected cavalier had already disappeared.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT CAME OF A HOP

"THERE was a sound of revelry by night," if we may quote the words of the poet, in relation to the hop taking place at the Mansion House, the fashionable hotel at Beach City.

Rose Darlington, who had come down to the ball-room, simply to show that she was none the worse for her morning's adventure, was drawn irresistibly into the tide. It was partly, however, to please her father, who wished to be assured that she had fully recovered her strength and spirits, and who fancied that his Rose was only made for music, laughter, and dancing.

As yet she was to him a mere girl, and he failed to recognize that she was developing into an earnest and true-hearted woman.

"A waltz with me now, Rose," whispered the young gentleman who had been her escort that morning. "You know you have promised me."

"Not now. You will excuse me. I am not fit to dance to-night."

"But you have just been dancing."

She walked away as she spoke, and rejoined her father, who stood at the end of the room, observing the dancers.

Mr. Howard's face was deeply flushed as he left the ball-room. Rose's quiet tones had stung him more deeply than if they had been barbed lances.

He sought the bar-room of the hotel, where a group of young men of his acquaintance stood conversing.

"Hey, Will!" exclaimed one of them.

"I'm tired, George," was the reply. "What say you to a stroll out in the air?"

"I am agreeable," was the reply, and the two friends walked away, leaving the others to resume their conversation.

We must precede them to a point where other friends of ours were gathered. This consisted of a group of four persons, composed of Mr. Proctor, the custom-house officer; Harry Bains, the man who had pulled the stroke-oar in the chase of the smugglers; old Tom Halyard and his son Fred, who had so distinguished himself that day.

The latter appeared to be the principal spokesman of the group, the others listening intently to his observations.

"Think you can find the spot, Harry Bains, where they took me prisoner?"

"Easy enough. Your signal reeds must be still where you left them."

"And I've got the spot nailed where they left me. These are our two starting points."

"How did they pull, Fred? with a long or short stroke?" asked Mr. Proctor.

"A long, stretching reach," answered Fred.

"You're a jewel, Fred. We will measure your lines with our oars to-morrow morning. Think you would know the place if you got in it?"

"Sure of that," confidently. "I've got two good marks to tell it by."

After a few minutes more thus occupied in conversation they separated, Fred strolling toward the Mansion House, drawn thither by the double attraction of music and the gleaming light.

He stood awhile on a corner of the porch, at some distance from the crowd, listening to the enlivening strains of the brilliant dance music.

He was so wrapped up in enjoyment that he failed to perceive two gentlemen, who came arm in arm down the porch, humming the air which the band was playing. One of them was Will Howard.

The first intimation Fred had of their presence was a rude surge against him that almost threw him from his feet.

"I know you," Will exclaimed. "It was you that insulted Miss Darlington in the street this morning. I did not want to raise trouble then. But it is not too late to chastise you now."

"See here, my friend, this is no place to ban'v a lady's name. You had better take him away and

pour some cold water on his head"—to Will's comrade. "If he wants to find me I can be seen at the coast-guard-house, down the beach, at any hour after daylight to-morrow. If he is anxious to have his fine coat dusted, he can have a chance there. But we have had enough of his drunken brawling here."

Fred turned and walked steadily away, paying no further attention to the utterances of his antagonist.

CHAPTER VII.

A QUEER "CHOICE OF WEAPONS."

"COME, Fred," said old Tom Halyard, meeting the lad on his way home, "It is time that old blood like mine, and young blood like yours, too, was safe abed. Those dancing snips, that spend half the day snoozin', can afford to spend half the night at toe-tippin'; but I've a notion that you and me mought want to be abroad 'arly to-morrow."

"Why?" replied Fred. "Is there anything special afloat?"

"Where's your eyes, boy? I thought you knew the weather sign betler. Look yonder to win'ward. D'yee see that white line, there where the moon'll spring in a couple of hours? And the wind has veered two points to the nor'east in the last half-hour."

Fred turned his eyes in the direction indicated, and closely observed the aspect of the sky.

"I noticed that before," he remarked, "but I did no know its meaning."

"It means wln'd," replied the old sailor. "And more than a capful, if I'm not mistaken. There's some mare's tails dipping down into the streak. Take it all in, Fred. It's part of your eddication. And now we'd best turn in."

"I'll sleep at the coast-guard-house," returned Fred. "If there's danger I want to be on the ground."

"Right, boy," cried the old man, clapping Fred's shoulder. "Keep your weather-eye open, lad. Remember that old Tom can't spare ye cheap."

Fred left his father with an affectionate clasp of the hand.

The wind was growing stronger, and a mournful, sooughing sound came from the sea, as if it felt in its deep heart the coming storm.

Fred shook his head doubtfully, and slowly entered the house, in which, indeed, most of his nights were spent.

Old Tom's prediction proved a true one. Long before morning the wind was rushing by in short, quick puffs that shook the house to its foundation. And the surf was beating with trip-hammer blows upon the hard sands, while the wind sheared the foaming crests of the waves, and tossed its white burden far inland.

Morning broke upon a lurid and terrifying scene. The wind had now risen to a hard, steady gale, broken only by occasional squalls, which passed with a whistle that was almost a scream, and rocked the house as if it would carry it bodily away.

No one slept late that morning in Beach City, and many a face was whitened with terror, or stilled with the shadow of a great awe, as they for the first time turned upon the ocean in its might.

The inmates of the red house had been long astir. Early daybreak found them upon the beach, from which they had drawn back their boats inside the danger line, while they were busily preparing certain other essentials in case of a wreck.

So far no sail was visible in the offing, and it was hoped that every craft had taken the alarm in time to run out to sea.

"There's only one thing of any use in a blow like this, and that's sea room," declared Harry Bains, as he coiled a slender rope beside an instrument that looked like a short cannon. "I pity the poor devils who haven't sniffed this gale in the air. To be caught on a lee shore in such a blow is certain ruin."

"Hallo! By Heaven! Harry, there she lifts!"

Fred sprung excitedly forward on giving this exclamation. He grasped a long spy-glass that lay on a chair beside Harry, and in an instant had it to his eye, looking out to sea in a northeasterly direction.

Harry had also risen and was shading his eyes as he looked seaward.

"Whereaway, Fred? I don't catch it. Can you make out anything?"

"Yes. You are looking too far out. Here, off the swell of Turtle Island. I make it out a barque of considerable tonnage. She is hauled close to the wind, but is a good deal too near shore for comfort."

He handed Harry the glass. He had just caught sight of the sail, and now gazed intently upon her for several minutes.

"I hope they will keep where they are. If there is work to do, I would rather not have such a lot of deadwood in our way. Touch off the gun, Joe!" commanded Harry.

One of the men at this order fired a light cannon that had been placed in front of the house. But the wind seized, as it were, upon the sound, and carried it off overland. It was impossible that it could reach, with its tidings of vigilance, the despairing crew.

"I fancy we have only stirred up the city folks," remarked one of the men. "Here comes a delegation."

"We can stand them," replied Harry. "That's only old Tom and Jack Sprat, and some other salt mackerel. They are the kind of timber we want."

"But there are chaps of a different tune behind them," pointing to a group of four or five well-dressed young men, who were coming down the beach.

"I'll be shot if it ain't my friend!" cried Fred. "The chap that promised to salt and pepper me. Well, he's got more heart than I gave him credit for, if it's a fight he is after."

"A fight at a time like this? I'll be hanged if we don't souse him in the sea, with his fine friend after him, if he mentions it," and Harry's ire was up.

"Is it me you want to see, my friends?" asked Fred, stepping up to the group of young men, who had now arrived.

"I presume you thought, when you chose to insult me last night, that I would not take the trouble to chastise you this morning," spoke out Wilbur Howard, advancing from the center of the group. "I never let any one insult me without repaying them."

"Oh! you don't? Well, that is certainly very condescending in you. What is it to be? Swords or pistols?"

A curl of disdain came upon Howard's lips.

"Those are the weapons of gentlemen," he said. "Such as you must be fought with churls' weapons."

"Oho! I see. Fists, you mean?"

"Yes," replied Howard, who was a practiced boxer.

"It's elegant weather to fight in," declared Fred, as a fresh gale whistled overhead, and the air came by full of driving mist. "Can you handle an oar?" "I am not afraid to handle an oar in fresh or salt water, with the best man that ever floated," Howard boastingly returned.

"All right, my covey!" retorted Fred, with a look that stung his antagonist to the quick. "In ten minutes more that good barque will touch bottom. Then there will be men's lives to save instead of boys' noses to scrap. There will be work for the life-boat, if a life-boat can swim in these waters. That is my challenge. If the life-boat goes out, I pull an oar in it, and I challenge you to pull a second. Any man or boy that tries to kick up a fight in a storm like this, and with a shipload of human souls drifting ashore under his eyes, ought to be cartwhipped if he had his due. There is only one

way to redeem yourself, and that is by taking an oar in the life-boat. Am I not in the right of it, gentlemen?"

A shout of approval went up from all present.

"By Davy Jones, Fred, you have him there!" cried old Tom, exultantly.

Will Howard's face whitened as he looked upon the raging sea. He glanced back at the resolute faces around him and dared not refuse. One more look at the sea, and he screwed up his courage to the sicking point.

"I accept," he said, but it was with trembling lips.

His voice was drowned in a despairing cry borne in on the gale from the sea. The barque had struck. One of her masts had gone by the board, and the wind was whistling through her shredded sails, while the climbing seas swept her helpless bulk from stem to stern.

CHAPTER VIII.

WRECKED ON THE BAR.

The point at which the vessel had struck was scarcely a quarter of a mile below the life-station—or coast-guard-house, as it was usually termed. She had beached on a sandy bar, about two or three hundred yards beyond low-water mark, and was now grinding deeper and deeper into the sands at every plunge of the waters.

Some few of the crew could be seen busy with axes, cutting loose the fallen mast. But the most of them were clinging desperately to the rigging, and looking beseechingly ashore, where they could plainly see the efforts making for their rescue.

A wreck at this time of the year was an almost unprecedented spectacle on that shore. The coast guard were only on duty from November and May. But fortunately, on this occasion they were present, being engaged in another duty, but ready and eager to employ their experience in the service of humanity. The apparatus of the life-service was in good condition, and ready for immediate use.

By this time nearly all the inmates of the city had assembled on the beach, facing the fierce storm, and, in their eagerness to do something toward the rescue of the unfortunate crew, simply annoying and checking the efforts of Harry Bains and his men.

"How is it, Joe; is there any ammunition for the mortar?"

"No: a round," replied the thin-featured man addressed.

"Here's a sheaf of rockets," cried Fred. "Shall I take them down the beach?"

"Yes, yes! And stir up there, boys, with the life-car. She may go to pieces before we get a line aboard!"

The men hastened to obey orders, getting out the life-car, which resembled a small covered boat, with air-holes in the top, and a ring at each end, to which a hawser might be attached to draw the boat through the surf.

The object now to be achieved was to send out a small line by means of a mortar-shot, or a rocket.

A stronger line being drawn out by this was to be attached to a mast of the vessel, and on shore, its purpose being to act as an aid in drawing the life-car forward and back, in a perilous journey for the living souls, who now tremblingly awaited the seemingly slow efforts at rescue.

The rocket was touched off, and flew seaward, hissing and gleaming. Behind it trailed a long, thin line from a coil that lay on the beach.

All eyes watched its course with eager interest. With what eager interest it was watched by the poor souls aboard the barque words cannot express.

A sound of disappointed expectancy arose from the crowd of observers, as the line was rapidly drawn back and recoiled.

Rocket after rocket was shot, with no better success, Harry Bains growing decidedly out of spirits,

as he called the weather all the hard names in the dictionary.

"The rocket business is played out," he ejaculated. "There is nothing left but the life-boat!"

"And that wouldn't live while you could turn your hand, in them breakers," remarked old Tom.

Meanwhile, Harry Bains had advanced upon the sands, speaking-trumpet in hand, as far as he dared.

"Ahoy, the barque!" he shouted, during one of the momentary lulls of the tempest.

It was next to impossible that his voice could carry against the wind to that distance.

"What are they up to now?" cried Harry Bains, sharply. "By Heaven! they are sending a man ashore with the rope!"

As he spoke, an alert form, bound round with what seemed to be a life-preserved, was seen to leap from the side of the barque into the seething waves.

"It's desp'rit!" said old Tom, shaking his head doubtfully. "I don't b'lieve no man's muscles kin buffet them waves."

Yet the man seemed to swim strongly and lightly. In, in, he came. He was in the inner line of the surf. He flung himself flat on the beach as the wave left him, with his hands clutching the shifting sands.

But the strong undertow dragged him resistlessly back, and flung him into the tossing sea ag'in.

Again and again it seemed as if he would make the shore. Again and again he was dragged away by the resistless undertow.

In despair, his strength nearly gone, he signaled with the line to be drawn on board again. Poor fellow, he was never to reach that deck alive! For the floating mast, with which they had previously sought to send a line ashore, was hurled by a strong wave with deadly force against his swimming form.

The rope was drawn in, but it had a corpse at the extremity.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CREW OF THE LIFE-BOAT.

A DEEP hush fell upon all present—the solemn hush of awe. Death had seized a victim before their eyes. Were they not destined to see the whole ship's crew perish helplessly before them?

"I hardly see the next move on the board," said Harry Bains, lugubriously. "The life-boat—"

"It won't live," interrupted Joe, the thin-faced man. "It would be squelched in two strokes of the oars."

"I doubt that," remarked Fred, modestly. "I'll venture to hold her head to the waves, if there's any of you ready to take the oars."

"There ain't your match at the tiller on the Jersey coast," cried old Tom, approvingly. "But it's too risky, I'm afraid."

"And who wouldn't risk when there's lives to save?" exclaimed Fred. "What say you, Harry, shall we launch the life boat?"

"By thunder, yes!" ejaculated Harry. "It's life for life, and the man that hangs back now is a coward. Get her out, lads, and bring her here opposite the wreck."

"But we are short-handed."

"I kin pull an oar with any man in the Jerseys," cried old Tom.

"And I'm your pardner!" another voice responded, and the stalwart form of Jack Sprat, the old waterman, stepped forward.

"B'avo!" cried Harry. "I couldn't ask for two better oarsmen. But there's an oar short still. Who's to take it?"

"I've got the man," said Fred, quietly. "The fellow that's so full of fight."

"No, no, Fred," replied Harry. "It's no baby's play now. He'd capsize us sure. We want no land-lubbers."

"He's bound to row, or back down. I see him yonder now. He's got to show the white feather

like a cowardly cur, or take an oar like a man. And if he backs water, I'll make him the laugh of Beach City."

He walked quickly away toward a group of spectators, composed of Mr. Darlington and his daughter, with several of their friends. Will Howard was standing beside Rose, chatting with a lightness of tone which hardly seemed to please her, for her face wore a very grave expression. He did not notice Fred's approach until the latter spoke to him.

"Now, my friend," said the young boatman, in a steady, determined tone, "the hour has come. We are about to launch the life-boat. There is a fine opening for the gentleman who is no more afraid of salt than he is of fresh water."

A fierce change came over Howard's face.

He turned to Fred, saying haughtily:

"Lead on. Wherever you dare to go, I dare follow!"

There was more than bravado in this. Will Howard was not without a sort of courage, though it might be the bravery of the cornered dog, and he saw a chance of making capital among his friends as a man of mettle, if he should come successfully through this exploit. "They would hardly venture out if they thought there was great risk," he said to himself.

"Come, Fred, I'm afraid of your fresh water sailor," said Harry Bains, with a glance of disdain at the fair-faced, mustached landsman. "Better let him slide. I have a volunteer here who has smelt salt water."

"All right," returned Fred. "He can back down if he will."

But there was that in his tone which Will Howard hardly liked. He felt, moreover, that he had gone too far now to recede. His heart trembled within him as he looked upon the tumbling surf, but he answered haughtily enough:

"If the life-boat goes out, I go out with it. There is no back down in the Howard blood!"

The wind had lulled slightly, and the roar of the breakers had lost some of its terror, yet every heart ceased for a moment its pulsations, as they saw the boat forced headlong into the wild waters and behold the oars rise and fall like clock-work in the foaming breakers.

With suspended breath the spectators watched its slow and perilous passage, fearing every minute to see the crew hurled into the drenching brine. But from the vessel came cries of joyful encouragement to the brave boatmen imperiling their lives for them.

Fred did not lose sight of the face of Will Howard, in his vigilant duty of meeting the successive billows prow on, and giving the sea no vantage ground in its conflict with the stanch craft.

He saw the face of the amateur life-boatman grow paler and paler, as he realized the fearful danger, which he had not before fully understood. He saw his lip tremble, though he still manfully kept time with the oars of his bardier comrades.

And now a shout went up from the shore which was audible to the oarsmen even against the fury of the storm, and which was echoed from the deck of the wrecked vessel. For the life-boat had passed the line of the breakers, and had reached the stiller waters on the lee of the wreck.

An involuntary cheer went up from her crew, as they felt her yielding like a mettled steed to their oars, and as the waves ceased to pour in fierce torrents over her stanch sides.

"Hurra, boys! We've won the belt!" cried Fred, in irrepressible excitement. "One—two—three—and we are there!"

The boat surged up under the lee of the wreck, in waters almost unaffected by the outer turmoil. In a moment she was made fast, and in a moment more her crew were on the careening deck, bearing a line from the shore.

"By all that's good, you're a man—sound and solid!" cried Fred, seizing the hand of his late an-

tagonist. "I knew it was in you! You can tread on me now if you want, and I won't kick."

Howard smiled proudly, as he returned Fred's grasp.

CHAPTER X.

THE LIFE-CAR SERVICE.

It was no easy footing on the deck of the stranded barque. She lay at an oblique angle to the line of the beach, her head forced so deeply into the sand of the bar that the bow was quite under water, while the stern was lifted almost clear of the waves. This brought her deck to a deep slope that rendered footing very precarious on the drenched and slippery planks. The crew had gathered near the stern, where they were sheltered from the fury of the gale, the waters rushing in sweltering torrents over the forward portion of the vessel, but only the flying spray reaching their post of vantage.

As the life-boatmen sprung on deck they were greeted with a cheer from the lately desponding crew.

"Take hold, for your lives!" cried the captain. "It's slippery footing aboard the poor Triton, and the chap that slips into that devil's yeast below there is a dead goose!"

Harry Bains sprung toward him, and grasped his extended hand, clinging to the same rope by which the captain sustained his footing.

"Keep a stiff upper lip, captain," he exclaimed. "We will fetch you all safe ashore. How many men have you?"

"There are fifteen of us left, counting some passengers," replied the captain, a stout, red-faced, muscular-looking man.

"Pull out the life-car, lads," sung out Harry, cheerily. "There's no time to lose. With a will now, boys. Where do you hail from, Cap?"

"From Havre, touching last at Liverpool. This is the barque, Triton, in the French and New York trade."

"Cheerily there, men! Cheerily ho!" yelled Harry. "Rip her out, boys! Rip her out! We have no time to play now."

Under their strong arms the life-car shot rapidly through the breakers. The ship's crew assisted in the duty, bracing themselves against mast and shroud, and at every point that afforded firm footing. In a few minutes it was pulled in over the deck.

"Send your passengers ashore first, Cap," cried Harry.

The captain designated two gentlemen, who clung to the after-rail, a middle-aged and a young man, their faces blanched almost to the whiteness of the foam that swept by them.

Fred looked into their pallid visages with a rising contempt, as he lent the elder man his hand to assist him to the life-car. He could not comprehend a fear so abject as that which seemed to affect them.

"The car will hold another," he remarked, after the two passengers had been deposited within it. "Who shall it be?"

Several men started forward, but the captain sternly ordered them back, enforcing his orders by grasping a marlinespike in his vigorous right hand.

"You take the place, Jack Bunce," he called out.

"Send some one else, sir," said Bunce, a tall, handsome seaman. "Jack Bunce was never yet the first to fly his craft."

"Now, none of your rascally airs, Jack. Orders must be obeyed, and it's every seaman's duty to obey them."

Without another word Jack walked forward and placed himself in the car, though his face showed great dissatisfaction with the performance.

A signal being now given to the shore, the car was launched overboard and drawn rapidly through the surf, dozens of hands grasping the shore rope, while its progress was steadied by a gradual paying out of line from the wreck.

Again and again the car was hauled to the wreck, and left it with its freight of living souls.

The number of persons on deck was now reduced to the captain and mate, two seamen, and the crew of the life-boat. Of these all had been busily engaged in the duty of handling the sea-line of the car, except Fred, who was occupied in signaling the shore under direction of the captain.

Wilbur Howard alone was idle, standing by the after shrouds, where he had stationed himself on first coming aboard, and to which he clung with a nervous grasp.

"She is lifting more and more astern, Cap," said Harry Bains. "It was almost a death groan she gave after that last raise. We must make time, or the hulk will part under our feet."

The life-car had just come aboard and been opened. Simultaneously another immense wave rolled in, lifting the bark on its lofty brow. It rolled away inward, and in its place yawned a vast gulf, the whole after part of the vessel seeming to stand for a moment, free from her watery bed.

She settled downward with an alarmin' creak, a wide crack opening in the planks of the strained deck.

It was too much for Will Howard's overtired nerves. With a cry of alarm he darted hastily forward to the life-car and sprang into it in advance of the two seamen, whom the captain had just ordered to take their places within its open cavity.

It was with almost a "view halloo!" that Harry Bains witnessed this movement.

"Took water, by Jove!" he ejaculated. "You've pinked him, Fred. He asks quarter."

"I thought he would hang out," replied Fred, contemptuously. "The fellow hasn't the backbone I gave him credit for."

"That's all very clever, my good friends," exclaimed the captain. "The chap pulled a lusty oar out through the breakers, and there's not one landsman in five thousand would have faced them out without facing them back. Let him go, and good luck go with him."

Will Howard heard this conversation, and was quite satisfied to take the captain's view of the case. He was, for the time being, thoroughly cowed by the terrors of the sea.

"So much for the life-car," cried Harry Bains. "It has done its duty nobly. But your barque won't live, Cap, for another trip. And there's just a good life-boat's crew of us left. It's good-by, then, to the Triton, peace to her old timbers; and it's man the life-boat. Tumble in, lads, tumble in. There's no time now for nail-biting."

"One second," exclaimed the captain. "I have forgotten my log-book."

"In with you, Cap," cried Fred, who was standing by the companionway. "Where is it? I will get it."

"On the shelf, in the left-hand state-room."

With a bound Fred leaped into the cabin, and hurried to the point indicated. He was hardly two seconds gone, but when he returned there was not a soul on the Triton's deck. The life-boat was manned, and waited only for its youthful coxswain.

"Here's the log," exclaimed Fred, appearing at the bulwarks. "Stand by to catch it."

The mate of the Triton, a hard-faced, brawny, ill-favored man, lifted his hand to catch the book which Fred flung into the boat.

The lad caught a glimpse of the hand and fell back in momentary amazement. It was the hand of the smuggler, which he had seen from beneath the door while lying bound in the smugglers' den!

"Ahoi, there!" screamed old Tom, in short, quick notes. "What in the blazes keeps you? Here comes a screeching wave."

It was on them, in fact, ere Fred could move, a vast, mountainous billow. In a moment it rolled under the vessel, lifting her higher than ever, and giving the life-boat such a surge that it tore loose and was hurled far away from her side.

But the Triton sunk into the trough of the sea with a heavier surge than ever.

On the quarter-deck appeared the tall, erect, unflinching form of Fred Halyard, going down with the ruined ship into the boiling waste of waters.

CHAPTER XI.

RETURN OF THE LIFE-BOAT.

As may well be imagined the observers on shore had been in a state of intense excitement during the occurrence of the even's just related.

Our friends, Mr. Darlington and his daughter Rose, were among the most interested of all the spectators of this exciting scene. The fact of Wilbur Howard being one of the life-boat crew, and the interest which Rose involuntarily felt toward Fred Halyard, gave them a personal sentiment toward these men so bravely periling their lives in the service of humanity.

Rose particularly watched the outward passage of the boat with a vital interest as if her own soul was sharing the terrible danger to which these devoted men were exposed.

Mr. Darlington grew more and more uneasy and excited as the car went out and was seen to be drawn on the deck of the vessel.

"Now! Heave ho! Hold over hand!" was sung out; and the car came through the waves with admirable speed.

In a few minutes it lay high and dry on the sands, and hundreds crowded around it as the cover was thrown back, and its prisoners released to the open air.

Mr. Darlington stood in the inner circle of this throng, and looked with a warm interest for the emergence of the sailors it was supposed to contain.

The first to appear was the tall, handsome sailor, Jack Bunce, who sprung upon the sands with an alert leap, which brought an involuntary shout of admiration from the lookers-on. He seemed the beau ideal of a sailor as he stood there as if on parade, with the loosely-knotted handkerchief about his neck, and his trim seaman's rig.

He was followed more slowly by the two other occupants of the car—the passengers of the Triton.

The first was a young, slender, delicate man, by no means good-looking, though tastefully dressed. The second to appear seemed his father.

Mr. Darlington had been looking eagerly, from the inner line of the crowd, and was face to face with the elder man as he emerged. One look into his face, and an involuntary, but quickly repressed cry came from the lips of the excited observer.

The rescued passenger raised his lusterless eyes, and fixed them for a moment on the face of the man who had given vent to this strange cry.

"You are quite pale, father," said Rose.

"I have seen a ghost."

"A ghost!" she repeated, with parted lips.

"Yes. A ghost of the past. Yonder older passenger. I thought him dead years ago. Who would have believed that he could have risen from the sea to haunt me? But he did not seem to recognize me."

Rose looked in her father's agitated face with a strange feeling. She had never seen him so wrought upon before. She dared not ask further questions. It was for him to reveal the mystery hidden in his words if he would—not for her to ask for it.

As the car made its last trip Wilbur Howard sprung from it, his tall form dilated, his handsome face flushed with pride, or, as some might have thought, with importance.

"Oh, yes! It was a rather rough row," he drawled indifferently, to the congratulations of some of his friends. "We don't have such work on the Schuylkill. I wouldn't care to take such pleasure-trips for a daily exercise—but, when men's lives are in danger, you know,"—and he flourished his hand, suggestively.

His voice was so haughty and disdainful that Rose involuntarily withdrew her hand from his grasp. She had an instinctive dislike for his demeanor.

"Why do they not draw out the car again?" was asked.

"I fancy the rest will take to the life-boat," replied Will. "Yes, there it is manned. And, by Jove! yonder comes a fearful wave!"

A deep hush, followed by a cry of alarm, came upon the throng, as they saw the vessel lifted upon this mighty billow, and at the same instant the life-boat torn from her side and dashed away on the fierce sea.

"There is a man on her still!" screamed a shrill voice. "It is the boy! It is Fred Halyard! Ha! she parts! She is going down! And the boy with her!"

There were the cries of women mingled with the alarmed voices of the men. Rose caught one glimpse of that erect figure, and then covered her face with her hands. She dared not look again.

On board the life-boat all was horror, both at the peril they had temporarily escaped, and at the deadly danger of the boy. But their oars were in the water. The captain of the Triton had taken the helm. They safely rode the threatening billow, though its waters seemed poured in torrents over their heads.

"There he lifts! There he lifts!" Old Tom suddenly yelled. "The boy's alive yet, thank Heaven! And he's swimming like a dolphin!"

They all caught sight of him at the same moment, his head now emerging, now buried under the seas, but swimming as vigorously as if he had been in still waters.

"He may fight for his life, but he will never make it," said the mate coolly. "No man ever swam ashore through a sea like that."

Suddenly old Tom shipped his oar, and caught up a light line which lay in the bottom of the boat. It was the line which had been used to pull out the heavier rope for the life-car.

The old tar deftly made a noose in one end, and then rapidly twined a large portion of the remainder into a coil.

"Look alive there, Fred," he shouted. "Got your eyes open?"

"Ay, ay!" came from the boy, who was still bravely buffeting the waves.

"Stand by, then, for a rope. Ahoy! Here she comes!"

The old man stood for a moment with uplifted arm, seemingly as steady as a rock, though the boat was tossing like a feather in the outer line of the surf. Then, with a half turn of the body, he sent the long rope whistling out into the air, it falling with a thud into the waves as its full length unfolded.

"By Jove, it's as straight as a die!" ejaculated Harry Bains. "The boy's got it! Fred's got it! Hurrah for old Tom!"

"Get the loop under your arms, Fred," shouted the old man. "We will bring you in safe."

"Now, with a will, lads!" cried the captain. "We are in the teeth of the trouble."

In, in, in, foot by foot. A last billow lifted her upon its broad bosom. The strong oars cut its white apex. It fell in swashing torrents on the sands, and rolled again to sea.

But the life-boat clung to the sands as the undertow ran like a cataract by her sides. In a moment she was high and dry upon the beach. The crew had sprung over and run her up ere another wave had time to strike her.

But Old Tom was otherwise occupied. He was pulling in, hand over hand, on the rope at whose end Fred still valiantly swam.

Not a sound greeted the incoming of the life boat. But as the boy was dragged hastily through the surf, and sprung to his feet, erect and safe, upon the sands, a shout went up that for the moment seemed to drown the howling of the storm.

CHAPTER XII.
A MUSKRAT'S HOLE.

SEVERAL days passed before the excitement calmed down in Beach City. By the time the storm was fairly ended the good ship Triton was rent into fragments and strewn for miles along the beach.

Her crew were lionized to their hearts' content.

"It pays for a ship's crew to be waterlogged on a coast like this. I wouldn't mind being wrecked here every summer, by way of exercise. We don't get such grub and grog often a-shipboard; and with every man his own captain. It won't last. It's a good deal too much like going to Heaven."

There were other lions besides the ship's crew. Fred Halyard found it no easy matter to escape throngs of admirers. But he had other business on hand which this publicity very much interfered with. The smugglers were yet to be trailed to their den.

"How now, Fred; when are we to make that trip through the inlets?" asked Mr. Proctor, on the second day after the storm. "It is likely they may leave us an empty locker to open."

"I'm afraid Fred's base line is in bad condition after this storm," replied Harry Bains.

"I have a new base line to triangulate," said Fred.

"Hallo! How's that?" cried Harry. "Something new in the wind?"

"How is it boy?" asked Mr. Proctor, impatiently. "What is your new base line?"

"The captain of the Triton is one end of it," said Fred. "And the mate the other. But just where the triangle points is only to be found by trailing these individuals."

"The captain and mate of the Triton!" exclaimed Harry. "What infernal wool gathering is this, boy? Are you trying some sell on us?" His voice had an angry ring.

"Nary a sell," Fred energetically replied. "As sure as you are standing there the 'Fly-by-Night' went down when the Triton was wrecked. Do you remember that I had seen the hand of one of the men in the smugglers' den? Very well; I saw that same hand again when the mate of the Triton held up his fist to catch the log-book."

"By Jove, Harry, this is important!" exclaimed Mr. Proctor, rising, and pacing the floor excitedly. "These men must be watched and followed. Who knows but we have the inside ring of the smuggling that has been going on for years along this coast?"

"It might be," replied Harry. "Fred has smelt a rat, in good earnest."

"I will see them and try to make out their plans this afternoon," said Mr. Proctor. "Of course they do not dream of being suspected, and may talk freely. If we can shadow them and make out their hiding-places it will be a royal business."

"Had not Fred and I best take a walk up by those fishermen's huts this afternoon? We may make out something."

"Certainly. Certainly. But keep your weather-eye open. Don't sell our game. These chaps are as keen as steel!"

At four o'clock that afternoon Harry Bains and Fred, accompanied by old Tom Halyard, who had volunteered to join them, were walking along the low foot of the ridge, which separated the mainland from the swampy region.

Just before them was the group of fishermen's huts referred to, extending for half a mile along the inlet, which here ran in almost a straight line, bordered by the sloping shore of the mainland.

Most of these were small, one-storied cabins, built at the edge of the water, with the boats of the occupants flaring in the stream, but fastened to spikes in the rear of the houses.

They were now near the largest cabin they had yet seen, since it boasted a second story. The ground on which it stood had been raised for several feet above the general level, while its side was so close to the bank of the inlet as almost to overhang it.

Harry looked curiously at it. There was no sign

of the water entering into any underground apartment.

"There's the owner now, menling his net over by the shed," remarked Fred. "Get him in talk. I want to take a private scout around these diggings."

The boy seated himself carelessly on a bank as if to rest, and began to amuse himself by snapping the light sticks that lay near him. Harry looked back after a few steps were taken, and found that Fred had almost disappeared, being stretched at full length in the long grass and weeds, which grew rankly there.

They walked on toward the fisherman, a tall, rawboned, sandy haired man, who seemed by no means inclined to be communicative. He kept his attention directed to his net, answering their questions in the shortest mode possible.

Meanwhile Fred had disappeared.

In fact, he was worming his way through the tall weeds to the bank of the inlet, along which he crawled, approaching the house foot by foot.

The dog of the fisherman, a shaggy terrier, was amusing himself by barking at the strangers who were talking to his master. He failed to discover this figure creeping through the weeds, or he might have had a more prolific source of amusement. A long-bodied, sleek cat, however, discovered Fred, stalked majestically down and took a close observation of him, and glided away again. Fred's eye just caught her as she was passing around the corner of the house.

"Ha!" he thought, delightedly. "White! Feet and tail tipped with black! I've seen that cat before. If I ain't I'm a monkey. Sure as shooting I'm on the right track."

He had now reached the corner of the house. A narrow bank of earth, not more than three feet in width, separated it from the inlet. Fred could hear some sounds within, as if the women of the household were at work. A window from the side overlooked the bank and the waters of the inlet.

"I have got to work another traverse," thought Fred. "Can't play mole handy. Will have to play min' krait."

He was not long in putting his plan into operation. Hastily slipping off his shoes, coat, and hat, he hid them in a cluster of bushes which grew beside the house. His next movement was to back down the steep bank, and slip noiselessly into the water. He was now hidden from observation by the inmates of the house, the bank cutting off the view.

"The boat went in here somewhere," thought Fred, as he worked his way through the shallow edge of the water. "Where it went in I can go."

Suddenly he was soused over head and ears in deep water. He had stepped into a pool—or was it a ditch leading inward? But the bank here seemed unboken.

Fortunately Fred knew a trick worth two of that. His quick eye perceived in the bank scarcely perceptible fissures, like cracks in the earth. Feeling below the water's surface, he discovered that the bank suddenly ceased; he had hold of a narrow edge of timber which yielded easily to his pull.

The secret was revealed. The seemingly solid bank was a swinging gateway, formed of boards, and covered with a thick deposit of clay. In this latter the grass and weeds had taken root, so that the bank seemed absolutely continuous, except for the narrow cracks which were only observable to very close examination.

Fred could hardly repress a whistle or a cry of exultation as he made this discovery.

"Cute as cucumbers," he mentally remarked. "Plaster it up again every time it's used. All right. I won't open your gate. I'll climb under like many a muskrat has before me."

Diving beneath the water, he was in an instant past the obstruction, rising into utter darkness beyond.

The young explorer lost not a second in clamber-

ing out of the water, and to the earthen floor of the underground room, so d-f-tly excavated in the earth beneath the fisherman's hut.

"There's the table and chairs," said Fred, gradually making out the objects in the room. "And, by thunder! there's the three knots in the washboard. That settles it. I am in the right room in earnest."

He only made out these knot-s by stooping down to a very close inspection. He now made the round of the room, examining every object closely. It contained several closets, all locked except one. This he pulled open. On its shelves were a number of packages firmly bound up in oil cloth coverings.

Fred was strongly disposed to investigate the contents of these packages, and had already opened his penknife for the purpose of making an incision in their coverings, when a sound above caused him to hesitate.

It was a quick step, followed by the opening and closing of a door. This was immediately succeeded by a creaking sound, while the light became suddenly stronger, displaying a flight of stairs, which he had not before observed, in a corner of the room. It was from this point that the light came.

"A trap-door!" mentally exclaimed Fred. "It's 'bout time to make tracks."

His bare feet made no sound on the floor as he hurried across the room. In a moment he had dropped himself noiselessly into the stream.

In fact, while he had been making these observations, other events had been occurring above. The fisherman grew shorter and shorter in his answers to the questioning strangers. He suddenly looked round.

"Where's the chap that was with you?" he cried. "There were three of you a minute or two ago."

"Fast asleep, I fancy, back there in the grass," said Harry, indifferently.

"He can sleep, that chap," remarked old Tom. "He's a boss at sleepin'."

"At burglarin', maybe," retorted the man, suspiciously. "Dang him, if he's trying to rob me, I'll treat him to a dose of buckshot."

He ran quickly to the house and disappeared within, closing the door behind him.

"Hadn't we best follow?" asked Harry. "If he finds the boy he might harm him."

"Not that rooster," replied Old Tom, contemptuously. "I'll match Fred ag'in' a barnyard full of such c'ves."

They walked slowly over toward where Fred had disappeared. He was nowhere in sight. In a few minutes the fisherman again emerged from his cabin.

"Blast the chap! where is he?" he fiercely cried. "I know he's playing some confounded game about here."

He stalked hastily through the grass, stumbling and almost falling over some object hidden in the thick weeds.

To the surprise of all present Fred lifted his head from the spot, drawling out in a sleepy accent:

"Wish you'd let a fellow alone when he's taking a snooze. Can't you keep your stumbling feet to yourself, without kicking along that-a-way?"

"What in the blazes are you sleeping in my grass for?" cried the man, savagely. "I will kick you again for a hint to keep away from here."

He ran fiercely at Fred, who lay almost on the brink of the inlet. He lifted his foot for a fierce kick, but he calculated slightly without his host.

For, at the same instant, Fred flung himself suddenly toward him, tripping him up, so that the impulse of his movement carried him over the boy's back, headforemost in'o the inlet.

"Let's absquatulate," cried Fred, laughing. "A wash will do him good."

"Any luck?" asked Harry, as they walked quickly away.

"Lots of it. Chunks of it," returned Fred. "A whole houseful of the gayest luck you ever heard of."

CHAPTER XIII.

A JOURNEY BY RAIL.

"Do you know that I have never yet thanked you for your great service to me?" said Rose Darlington in a low tone, as she seated herself beside Fred Halyard.

"My great service?" asked Fred, in a tone of surprise.

"You don't deserve thanks," returned Rose, somewhat petulantly. "It is a matter of such slight importance with you to save a person's life, that it is not worth remembering."

"Oh! indeed, you are wrong!" he earnestly replied. "But there has so much passed since, that I did not catch your meaning for the moment."

"You have had your own life to save, and that of many others," she rejoined.

"But, believe me, your life was worth to me that of all the rest. I would have risked mine twenty times over to save you."

She sat still for an instant, and then turned to him quickly.

"Is it true," she asked, "as people say, that Mr. Howard took part in that life-boat expedition in consequence of a quarrel and a challenge with you?"

Fred started, and a look of disapprobation came upon his face.

"That is hardly a fair question, Miss Darling-on," he replied.

"You gentlemen always make that answer when you do not wish to say yes," returned Rose. "I have a reason for asking, Mr. Halyard. It is not idle curiosity on my part. And I should be glad to learn the cause of the quarrel."

"It was a mere trifle. Some hasty words only," replied Fred. "I would prefer that Mr. Howard should tell you."

"He was in fault. I am sure of that."

"There was nobody seriously in fault, Miss Darlington," said Fred, gravely.

Fred rose and walked away.

He was not pleased with this questioning. And yet, after a moment's thought, he said to himself: "If she is engaged to Mr. Howard she certainly has a right to know his character. It might have been better if I had spoken plainly."

"Fred Halyard! The very chap I was looking for," cried Mr. Proctor, as Fred reached the porch of the Mansion House. "I have work cut out for you, my boy, if you are ready to undertake it."

"That depends," replied Fred, "if I am fit for the work, or the work fit for me."

"Were you ever in New York?"

"No," answered Fred, looking up with interest.

"Do you think you could make your way about there?"

"Nobody was ever lost who knew how to use his tongue," returned Fred.

"The captain and mate of the Triton leave this afternoon for New York. I think it important to know just where they go, who they see, and what they do. And I know nobody wider-awake than Fred Halyard for a delicate job of this kind."

Fred reflected a moment. He would like to go to New York. But he did not want to spoil Mr. Proctor's plans. He shook his head doubtfully.

"I will never do for that task."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Proctor.

"They know me too well."

"You can easily keep out of sight. They will not be on their guard."

"Well, if you are willing to trust me—"

"I know that you will do it all right," said Mr. Proctor, enthusiastically. "I have confidence in your wit, my boy."

"More than I have," replied Fred. "But I don't think they will throw me easily. When do they go?"

"In the three o'clock afternoon train. Can you be ready by that time?"

"I can be ready in ten minutes," returned Fred. Mr. Proctor proceeded to go more into the details

of his project, giving the boy close instructions as to how he was to act.

"Meanwhile, we will be at work here," he continued. "These two men went out on a fishing trip on the inlet this morning. But it wasn't sheepshead or trout they were after. I watched them with a glass from the light-house, and they rowed straight into the inlets, toward the fisherman's cabin which you and Harry tracked yesterday."

"Hal! That is interesting," exclaimed Fred. "Are you going to raid it?"

"This very night. I only want them to get fairly out of town first."

"Don't wait for night. Delays are dangerous," said Fred, in a meaning tone. "My wet clothes must have left their mark on the floor. If the fisherman has found my tracks it's my notion there's not a minute to lose."

"You are right, Fred," cried Mr. Proctor, hastily rising. "An hour's time may save them. Do you get ready at once for your journey, and I will wake up Harry Bains and his crew. It will be our best plan to row over."

Fred hurried toward his home, full of boyish enthusiasm at the new experience before him.

He was stopped on the way by Mr. Darlington, who engaged him in conversation for several minutes. As Fred walked on after this interruption, he noticed two gentlemen coming toward him, whom he recognized at a glance as the passengers who had been saved from the Triton.

He passed them without noticing that their eyes were closely fixed on Mr. Darlington.

"I knew him at first sight," said the father to the son. "But I had to play ignorant then. That was hardly the time to request a private interview with my friend, Mr. Darlington."

"Are you sure he knew you?" asked the son.

"If you had seen his pale face you would not ask that question. And if he did not I can easily refresh his memory."

Fred was ready at train-time. He had donned his best clothes in honor of the occasion. His form was one on which fashionably-cut clothes sat with grace. He was too natural in his movements to be awkward. Any one would have supposed him a young gentleman returning from a long visit to the shore, in which he had exposed his face rather freely to the sun.

The persons of whom he was in pursuit were present. Fred managed to keep himself out of their sight. Yet it was not through mere chance that he was lounging near the ticket-office when the captain approached to procure his ticket. To his surprise his quick ear caught the demand for a ticket for a way-station instead of a through passage for New York.

"That's my station," said Fred to himself, obtaining a ticket for the same place, though with a shadow of disappointment in his heart.

"A man makes a larger track in a small place," he philosophically soliloquized. "It may make my job easier. It is plain enough that they have some trickery on the carpet."

The train rolled rapidly away. As may be imagined, Fred was deeply interested in the journey, keeping his eye at the car window, and watching the farms, villages, and towns which they passed with unwearying interest.

"What station is this?" he asked of the brakeman, as the engine stopped longer than usual.

"Midway. We water here."

"Are we near Concord?"

"It is the second station ahead."

Fred stepped out on the car platform. He was cramped from sitting so long in one position. Midway was evidently a railroad junction. A track crossed at right angles to the one upon which they were. "That must be the South Jersey Road," said Fred to himself. "But as I ain't going down South Jersey, I'd best get back into the train."

He had his hand on the guard, and was about to

step back into the car, when he saw a passenger descending from a forward car, followed immediately by another. It was the captain and mate of the Triton.

Fred hastily loosed his hold, and turned away so as to hide his face.

"Who knows?" he soliloquized. "Folks have changed their minds. Maybe I'll go down South Jersey yet."

The two passengers walked into the waiting-room of the station. The train steamed away without them.

"Cute they are," remarked Fred. "And come near as a hair slinging me. Let a miss be as good as a mile, and I've got a strong notion to go down South Jersey."

He waited nearly an hour ere the South Jersey train came puffing up to the station. Fred kept well in the background until he had seen his game safely on board, and then took the car next to theirs. But, in his new caution, he did not get on board until the train had actually started. He was bound to keep them bagged this time.

Fred, somehow, had business on the platform at every stop that was made. If he had been inspector of platforms he could not have been more diligent.

"All out for Crockettstown!" cried the conductor. Fred, as usual, hastened to get out.

"All aboard!" came the quick, following cry.

"Come, young man, you'll be hurt yet, if you stand out at every station till the train starts," said the brakeman.

"I'm all aboard!" replied Fred, grasping the step-guard.

"No, I'm not," he suddenly repeated. "Guess I'll stop at Crockettstown."

He had caught a glimpse of two men descending from the forward car.

Fred walked toward the lower end of the platform as the train started and slowly gained headway.

"I've heard of this place before," said Fred. "It's where Jim Bundy, the sailor that came ashore with me, is settled. I'd like to call on him and see if his memory has come back."

As he thus soliloquized he was keeping a close eye on the captain and mate of the Triton, who walked quickly away down the main street of the little town.

He had no occasion to follow them, for he saw them from where he stood, entering a house about half-way down the short street.

Fred was not long in taking a closer observation of this establishment.

A sign-board swung in front of it, ornamented by a figure of some nondescript animal, painted in faded vermilion.

"Red Lion Inn by James Bundy," he read, retreating a step in his astonishment. "Well, if this don't beat Banniger! Never thought I was going to make this roundabout trip to call on Jim Bundy."

Meanwhile his friends at Beach City had been less successful. They had safely reached the fisherman's cabin—to be told by his wife that he was away, and would not be back for a day or two.

Then, somewhat against the will of this good lady, the cabin was closely searched, but without finding any entrance leading below. The doorway to the underground apartment was too well hidden to be easily found.

"What next?" asked Mr. Proctor, in dismay.

Without answering Harry dashed out of the house, and to the neighboring village of Swamptown. He was back again within fifteen minutes.

"It is as I thought," he exclaimed. "Our contraband fisherman has been gone these three hours, by carriage, and all his spoils with him. I have hired the fastest team in the place. There is nothing now but to give chase. Take the boat back, boys. Mr. Proctor and I will tend to this little business."

He dashed away again for the town, Mr. Proctor closely following.

CHAPTER XIV.

A TIGHT RACE.

FRED HALYARD put up at the Black Horse, the rival tavern to the Red Lion. It was a little further up the street, but commanded an easy view of the portal of that place of entertainment—for man and beast as its sign indicated.

He would not have hesitated to acknowledge that he was hungry. It was full supper-time, and his journey had given him an appetite.

"But it's too confounded hot to go inside," said Fred, to the proprietor. "Can't you send me a bit of bread and cheese, or something else eatable, out here? I rather like your porch, and would sooner sit where I am."

He did not want to lose sight of the Red Lion, in fact.

The landlord, without delay, sent Fred out a substantial meal—and, unfortunately, a noggin of ale. It was something the boy was not accustomed to, and it went to his head. He stretched himself at full length on the bench—he felt so much more comfortable in that attitude—with his arm under his head for a pillow, and was soon fast asleep.

The mate had started out for an after-supper stroll through the diminutive town, and had at a glance recognized something familiar in the form of the sleeping boy on the porch of the rival inn. A red flush came into the embrowned face of the mate as he lightly stepped up into the porch, and looked down upon the sleeper.

"Trapped!" he ejaculated. "And by that infernal young rat who has been in our meal-bag for the last two weeks. I'd best have left him in the ditch, as Long Bill advised. And the rascal had a hand in taking me from the Triton. Hang him! he's as sharp as a steel-trap, or he'd never got to the windward of us this way. But if I don't circumvent him while he's snoozing, then tell me I don't know a capstan-bar from a hair-pin."

He walked quickly away, leaving Fred to the undisturbed enjoyment of his slumber. In a few minutes more he was in deep consultation with the captain, their wonder being specially exercised to understand how they had been recognized as the smugglers, and followed to this out-of-the-way locality.

"It can't be," said the captain, decidedly. "It's just impossible. He is here on some other business."

"Then his other business has struck him quick, for I twigged the chap this afternoon on the platform at Beach City. I thought then he was playing shy—tacking and filling round as if he had game in his eye. Blast him! I didn't reckon we were the game! We've got to shift harbor while he's snoozing, Cap."

"It looks thundering like it," replied the captain. "It would not show well on the log for two old salts like George Carstairs and Jake Miller to be outsailed by a jolly-boat like this boy."

Fred slept on, unaware of the tempest he had raised. He slept, in fact, till the loud rattle of wheels in the quiet street aroused him to a sense of something besides antediluvian monsters.

The boy sprung hastily to his feet, conscious in an instant that he had been off duty. His first look was toward the Red Lion sign.

The second look was at the vehicle whose coming had awakened him.

It had stopped in front of the Black Horse Inn, and its occupants were looking at Fred with the greatest surprise. Nor was his astonishment less than theirs, on recognizing the faces of Harry Bains and Mr. Proctor.

"What in the world brings you here?" exclaimed the latter. "I thought you were in New York."

"My pigeons did not fly straight," answered Fred, coolly. "And what in the world brings you here? I thought you were in Swamptown."

"Our pigeon did fly straight," answered Harry Bains. "Straight to Crockettstown. We've chased

him twenty miles now. If you'd kept your weather-eye open, you'd have nailed him."

"That's true," said Fred, apologetically. "How long have I been asleep, landlord?" he asked of that personage, who had just appeared.

"A matter of a good hour I should calculate," replied that individual, looking toward the sun, then near its setting.

"Anything been going on around here while I was wasting time snoozing?"

"There was a chap from the Red Lion over here a while ago, taking a look at you."

"What sort of a man?" asked Fred, quickly.

"A short, heavy-set fellow, with a mahogany face, and ugly enough to turn milk sour."

"You are sure he came from the Red Lion?"

"He trotted back there straight as a die."

"We are badly sold, then," exclaimed Fred, with a disconsolate look. "And it's all my fault. If there'd been no use in staying awake I'd have been as spry as a sand-snipe."

Harry Bains laughed at Fred's disconsolate manner.

"See here, my friend," he said to the landlord. "Has there been anything else stirring? We are on the track of a hollow-cheeked, sandy-whiskered coon, in a one-horse vehicle. Have you seen such a customer?"

"The identical chap drove into the Red Lion yard an hour ago, just after this young man went to sleep."

"The deuce you say! Then we are wasting time here." He gathered up the reins to drive on.

"Hold up, Harry," said Mr. Proctor. "We may find more than we bargain for with our two burly sailors as reinforcements to the fisherman."

"Don't count on them," remarked Fred, gloomily. "I bet a cow everthing is rose-colored now, and the whole party five miles away."

"You are right there," volunteered the landlord. "They drove away twenty minutes ago, with Jim Bundy's best horse in the shafts."

"The blazes they did!" cried Harry. "Then our chase ain't done, that's all. How many were in the carriage?"

"Three. The man you call the fisherman, the thick-set man, and another tall, fine-looking fellow."

"And have you a horse that can mate Jim Bundy's?" asked Mr. Proctor.

"Yes; and beat him hollow."

"Put him in our shafts then, quick as lightning. We've got to overhaul those coons or bust!" exclaimed Harry.

"And I'll take a turn down to the Red Lion," announced Fred. "I'm curious to see Jim Bundy."

Our youth walked quickly down the street in front of the rival inn. It was an old-fashioned building, with steep gables, and long, low out-houses.

In front stood a pump and horse-trough, seemingly the resort of all journeymen through that quiet country town. A teamster was there now, watering his dusty and thirsty horses. On the porch stood a man who was talking with the roughly-dressed horseman.

There was an undefinable air about him of the sailor, which had first attracted the boy's attention.

"If that's Jim Bundy," thought Fred, "he must have been burnt deep, for fifteen years haven't bleached him. Guess I'll cross over for a closer look."

That it was Jim Bundy there was soon no doubt, for he heard the teamster address him by that name. Fred looked at him as he passed the porch, with a deep and searching scrutiny.

And at the same time Jim Bundy's shifting orbs rested on him. For a wonder they became fixed, riveted upon Fred's countenance. Bundy fell back a step, a strange look coming into his face.

"Where have I seen those eyes?" he muttered. "Is it the face of—" He paused in seeming perplexity. "The Monsoon—the Monsoon—" These

words came from him as if in an effort to recall some forgotten event of the past. It was a half-frightened expression with which he continued to regard the young man.

"So that is Jim Bundy," he cogitated. "And what is 'the Monsoon'? I'd give my hat to know."

The carriage was ready when he reached the Black Horse. They lost no time in taking their seats.

"They have about a half-hour the start," cried the landlord. "And the road is a straight one. You'll have to drive like fun. Don't kill the horse, though."

For miles and miles, as it seemed, they drove on.

"There is a town ahead," exclaimed Fred. "A railroad station, too, for yonder is the smoke of a train just starting out."

"And there is a wagon of some kind coming this way," continued Harry.

The approaching vehicle soon drew near. It held but one person, whom a glance told them was the sandy-haired fisherman of Swamptown.

"By Jove, they've slipped us!" exclaimed Harry.

"Hold up there, my friend," cried Mr. Proctor.

The latter, with a look of alarm, hastened to obey orders.

"Now let me know what you have done with your freight, and without a minute's parley."

"If you let out mebbe you'll catch 'em," replied the man, with a chuckle of satisfaction. "They're off in that train for York. If you've any sort of a lively critter than you mought try."

"We'll try the town," Mr. Proctor briefly remarked. "The fellow may be lying."

He had, told the truth, as they soon discovered. Inquiry of the ticket agent proved that two such persons had bought tickets for New York, and taken the train.

"Any baggage?" asked Harry.

"They had sachels. I did not see anything else."

"What time will that train reach New York?" asked Mr. Proctor.

"It's only an accommodation. It will not get there before eleven to-night."

"And there is no Express that will beat it?"

"There's no Express gets in ahead of them—on this line. If you were in Trenton now, there is a Pennsylvania R. R. Express passes there at nine."

"Trenton, eh? Can it be caught?" The question was quick and imperative.

The agent again examined his time-tables.

"It might," he said, dubiously. "There is a branch train leaves Bringhurst, three miles from here, in half an hour. It will connect at Trenton with the Penn'a Express if it makes time."

"Three miles, eh—and half an hour to do it in! Many thanks," he called back to the agent. "Come, Fred, there's not a minute to lose. Wait for me here, Harry. We must not overload our horse."

They were off again, without delay, through the growing darkness, toward Bringhurst.

And for a wonder it landed Fred in Trenton early enough to catch the nine o'clock Express. There was little fear of delay when once safely aboard the lightning train. It rattled into the depot at Jersey City on time, at a quarter to eleven.

Fifteen minutes to reach the South Jersey ferry! It needed keen work. Fred had received full instructions from Mr. Proctor how to act and hastened as rapidly as his feet could carry him along the wharves on the Jersey City side.

The clock was just pointing to eleven when he entered the South Jersey depot—and, prompt on time, in rode the accommodation train.

"I calculate we've flung the rat this time," said a passenger who, with a companion, passed close to where Fred stood with averted face.

"I calculate you haven't," thought the latter.

He was again on the track of his game.

in Beach City might have occurred a month ago, for any evidence which the ocean retained of its late turmoil.

The summer visitors were flitting about in their ordinary butterfly fashion, as if they supposed that life was all a summer, and had forgotten the lesson just taught them by the sea.

Rose Darlington was one of those to whom the lesson had come with an awe-inspiring effect. She looked now upon the ocean with a half-dread, as if it was never more to be trusted in her mind.

Will Howard laughed at what he called her sentiment.

"It is only a lazy lubber, after all," he said, lightly. "It gets up a row now and then, and tries to scare us out of our wits."

They walked moodily down the sands for some distance. Neither seemed inclined to break the silence.

"I don't see," he at length remarked, "what you mean by treating me as if I was a great baby. You have been playing fast and loose with me for a year now, you know you have. I am sure we are both old enough to marry. Your father is perfectly willing. I cannot see why you keep putting it off."

"You are not giving me reason to be in any great haste," was her answer, accompanied by an involuntary curl of her lip. "You act so differently now, Will, from what you did when we were first engaged."

"I feel just the same, Rose. But a fellow gets tired of spooning about a girl, you know."

"You shall have no occasion to spoon about me any longer," she exclaimed, now thoroughly angry.

She turned and walked away from him.

"I know how it is," he scornfully called out. "It's that lout of a Jerseyman you're getting soft on, just because he swam ashore with you."

"Whom do you mean?" she quickly asked.

"I mean that Halyard boy—a chap that I have not quite set led with yet."

"I would advise you not to try to settle with him," she answered, her face full of scorn. "There may be some more life-boat service."

She hastened on, as if not deigning further words with him.

"So the hound has been telling her that!" said Will, with an ejaculation that was almost an oath. "That's two I owe him. We will see if I don't get even with him!"

Rose walked away, half-angry and half-amused.

She continued her walk with a new thought in her head, at which she could not but laugh. The idea of her being smitten with Fred Halyard.

At about the same hour in which this scene occurred, Mr. Darlington was entertaining a visitor in his room at the Mansion House. It was the elder passenger of the Triton, the man whose escape from the ocean had seemed to him an apparition from the grave.

"So," said Mr. Darlington, with a gesture of disgust, "you have concluded to take off the mask you have been wearing these few days past? It was too transparent, indeed, to make it worth while to wear it."

"Did you see through me so easy as that?" asked the visitor, with a shrill laugh. "I thought I was deep; but I must have been very shallow."

"Yes, very," was the reply.

"I knew you. Of course I did. But I did not wish to trouble you to recall my face to your memory until I had made a few inquiries. There was no use to ask for an interview until I had my business laid out."

"Until you had figured out the amount of blackmail that would buy you off," observed Mr. Darlington.

"I don't like that word," replied the visitor. "Blackmail savors of soiled hands. I have always kept mine moderately clean."

He held up his hands, and contemplated them with a show of great satisfaction.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. DARLINGTON'S VISITOR.

THE STORM WHICH HAD PRODUCED SUCH A SENSATION

"How much is your price?" asked Mr. Darlington, impatiently.

"Business is business, of course," answered the visitor. "I think at about five hundred thousand dollars."

The answer was given with a cool insolence, and a look of fixed determination, that still further enraged Mr. Darlington.

"Our interview had better close," said the latter, quickly advancing to the door, which he flung open. "I will bid you good-day, Mr. Yarnall. I will bring you round that half-million when I am ready to hand it over. Meanwhile, let me advise you that this locality is unhealthy for persons of your complexion."

"If you really think so I will go," rejoined Mr. Yarnall, rising from his rocking-chair. "And I hope you will not be very long about it, Mr. Darlington. I should not care to be obliged to hurry you."

"Wait patiently until I come," retorted Mr. Darlington, with a smile of scorn.

"Oh, by the way," remarked Yarnall, from the passageway outside the door, "I forgot to mention that my son Frank is with me."

"But what is that to me?"

"I simply thought that you might possibly be interested in it. But perhaps you have forgotten the words of old Bruce's will?"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I have no objection to refresh your memory. His estate, you may recollect, was to go to the nearest heir in the second generation. Failing such an heir it descended to the first generation. It was under that clause that you inherited."

"I am well aware of all that."

"You inherited simply because George Bruce and his son—who was the real heir—disappeared during a sea voyage. They have never been heard of from that day to this."

"Except in Amos Yarnall's imagination."

"That was all imagination, indeed," said Yarnall, with his shrill laugh. "Although I have bled you a little by pretending to know where that boy might be found, it was all a mere fraud. I knew no more than the man in the moon."

"Well, you are growing honest, I declare!" exclaimed Mr. Darlington, in great surprise.

"Oh, yes! Rogues are always honest when honesty is the best policy, you know."

Mr. Darlington could have struck him for his insolence of tone.

"There is enough of this!" he impatiently exclaimed. "I don't see that we have any further business."

"Very little, that's a fact," returned Yarnall, indifferently. "I will only say, in conclusion, that I am a relative of Mr. Bruce. Not so near as you, to be sure, but still a legal relative. And, secondly, I have had advice on this matter, and learn that my son Frank is the real heir under the will, in the absence of George Bruce's son."

"He was not born at the time of Mr. Bruce's death!" cried Mr. Darlington.

"Pardon me. I can prove that he was. I was under the same impression as you, or I might have troubled you somewhat sooner for that little matter of half a million. Good-day, Mr. Darlington." And I hope that you will appreciate the fact that Amos Yarnall is not the man to show his hand until he is sure of his trumps."

He turned coolly away, and walked off, leaving Mr. Darlington almost as pale as himself.

"Can it be so?" he muttered, catching at the door for support. "This man will crush me, if he can, as heartlessly as he would crush a fly."

CHAPTER XVI.

A STROLL DOWN BROADWAY.

We must return to Fred Halyard, who had just taken up his lost trail again, at the ferry of the South Jersey R. R. Co., in Jersey City.

The two men whom he had seen, walked on, Captain Carstairs lighting a cigar, and passing to the front of the ferry-boat to smoke. Fred did not think it advisable to follow too closely.

He heard them laughing to themselves as they conversed together.

He took a seat in the cabin, well satisfied that his game could not escape by water. And the boy's heart throbbed with expectation as he saw through the windows of the ferry-boat a long line of wharves, and ships, and houses, stretching seemingly for miles away.

He must track these men to their destination. He had been outwitted at Crockettstown. Would he be in New York?

As he thus cogitated the boat touched the wharf. Fred held back in the cabin until he saw his quarry step ashore. He then warily followed.

Fred pulled his hat down over his eyes and walked steadily on, brushing the mate as he passed him, but looking neither to right or left.

He went straight on to the other side of the street ere looking back. Reaching the pavement he carelessly turned, just in time to catch a glimpse of his two men entering the carriage for which they had been bargaining.

"I don't see why I can't afford a ride as well as those coons," thought Fred. "Mr. Proctor don't want me to walk where riding's healthier."

He was back across the street again quick as a flash. The cabman had just closed the door of his coach, and was mounting his box. To his utter surprise he found a slender young chap mounting from the other side.

"Well, if you haven't the making of a brass kettle in your face, I'll be shot!" he growled. "Down with you, you wharf-rat, or I'll burst your b'r'er!"

"Dry up, cabby," was Fred's somewhat insolent answer. "Wait till I shut your eye up before you explode. I can't afford an inside passage, but here's a good fifty-cent piece for a deck trip."

"Make it a dollar," said the cabman, with the instincts of his profession.

"Dry up, I tell you. I ain't here to buy your old cab."

"What's wrong there?" roared Captain Carstairs, putting his head out of the carriage door. "Are you going to be all night starting?"

"I'm off now," called back the cabman, giving the rein to his horses. "Hand it over," he said to Fred. "And you've got a mighty cheap ride!"

"Oh, yes! dirt cheap!" returned Fred. "It's a way you fellows have; driving a cab for pure charity."

The cabman laughed, and kept up his chaffing conversation with Fred, while they rolled up through streets which looked to the boy, in the midnight gloom, like deep rock channels through some vast plateau. And the line after line of gleaming lamps, which burst upon and faded from his eyes, appeared to him as if the city was getting up a grand illumination in his honor."

They stopped at the door of a hotel, in a wide, well-lighted street, that was yet thronged with human life.

"What do you call this street?" asked Fred.

"Now that's too thin," replied the cabman, with a wink. "A clap as sharp as you, and don't know the Bowery? That don't wash!"

Fred laughed knowingly, and slipped from the cab on the street side, as its inside passengers got out upon the pavement, and entered the hotel, after settling with the driver.

"Good-night, cabby," cried Fred.

"You're a sharp young dog, you are. Good luck go with you."

He drove off as Fred entered the hotel. The captain and mate had already procured a room, and were on their way up-stairs as he cautiously ventured in.

"Guess I'll put up here, too," thought Fred. "They're good for the night. And I'm obliged to

them for not taking me to one of your lofty-priced Broadway hotels. This is good enough for me."

In a half-hour more he was sweetly slumbering.

But he was wide awake at sunrise the ensuing morning. He got an early breakfast, so as to be ready for the business of the day. He then provided himself with the morning papers, and ensconced himself in a corner, with his paper so spread out that little more than his feet were visible.

And what a time he had reading those papers, with both ears on duty to catch the least sound of a footstep, and one eye constantly creeping around the edge of the journal he was perusing, in search of every passing form.

He was roused to a sense of his heedlessness by the sound of a voice addressing him:

"Will you let me look at your *Tribune* for a few minutes, young man?"

It was the voice of Captain Carstairs.

A thrill ran through Fred's veins. Fortunately he had the paper he was reading opened so as to conceal his face and the upper part of his body.

He did not trust himself to speak, but slipped his hand in his lap, picked up the *Tribune* that lay there, and silently held it out. He seemed too deeply interested to take time to speak.

Captain Carstairs quietly took it and walked away, paying no further attention to the reader.

It was full five minutes before Fred ventured to look around the edge of the paper, to see the lay of the land.

The captain was seated in an arm-chair, intent upon his reading. The mate stood with both elbows on the office desk, chatting with the clerk. Neither was paying any attention to him.

"Maybe I'd best vamoose," thought Fred. He rose, and hurried to the door of the hotel, still reading, and carefully keeping his face concealed behind his paper.

Reaching the street he had immediate business on the other side. Here he found a very convenient seat on a dry-goods box, where he could continue his reading, wonder at the tide of life which ebbed and flowed up this busy street, and watch the entrance to the hotel opposite.

An hour—two hours—passed. It was ten o'clock. Fred began to fear that his men had found some other way out, and was just about to seek a rentance to the house, when they appeared at the door.

They took a preliminary glance up and down the street, and then emerged, walking slowly away. Fred kept pace with them on the other side of the street.

He drew closer and closer to his men. It seemed so easy to lose them in those countless throngs.

They walked for a considerable distance down Broadway, gradually checking their pace, and examining the stores they were passing.

Finally, after a close look at a signboard, they entered one of these stores.

Fred emulated them in reading the sign. It ran as follows:

"J. W. Tompkins, Son & Co. Silks and General Dry-goods."

He was for a short time just at a loss what to do. It might be dangerous to enter. It might be dangerous to remain outside. He waited, however, for some ten minutes, and as they did not reappear, he boldly walked into the store.

"What can I do for you?" asked a clerk, briskly approaching Fred.

"If you could get me a glass of water to begin with I'd thank you," replied our hero. "I feel a little faint."

"Certainly. Of course," said the salesman, hastening away.

Fred took the opportunity to glide stoopingly to a low stool that just stood beneath the open window. His keen ear was almost at the opening.

"She will be ready to clear by August 25th," spoke

a voice that was strange to him. "You can reach Liverpool in time to take hold."

"And I hope the *Mary Ann* won't follow the Monsoon and the *Triton*," returned the mate's voice. "Bad luck goes in threes, you know."

"But if it's fifteen years apart it's worth risking," replied the first speaker.

"Is our private cargo made up?" asked Captain Carstairs.

"Speak lower, man. You have too much of the hurricane in your tone," came a warning voice. "You will find all ready. You say that our last venture is safe?"

"Yes; at Bundy's. But it may not be safe to leave it there long."

Fred saw the man approaching with his glass of water. He slipped away from his post of vantage.

He had not caught many words, but they were brimful of meaning. He had hit the conversation in the very heart of its suggestiveness.

"I've a notion we've got them by the horns," thought Fred.

CHAPTER XVII.

JACK BUNCE SPEAKS.

THE reader must follow us now to a room in old Tom Halyard's residence, which was the favorite sitting apartment of the old sailor, and which, but that it had none of the rocking motion of the deep sea, might have passed for the cabin of a sea-going ship.

There were four persons present. Old Tom himself and his adopted son, Harry Bains and Mr. Proctor making up the company.

The old man stroked his grizzled beard in delight as he listened to Fred's story of his adventures in pursuit of the smugglers, and of his final success.

"You're a chip of the old block, lad!" he cried. "Don't know what old block it is; but I know that it was Tom Halyard that brung ye into shape; and you're an honor to his trainin'."

"Hold up, old man!" returned Harry Bains. "Don't be making a fool of the lad with your sweet oil. There's no use spoiling good timber with polish. And so you nailed them, Fred?"

"Yes," replied Fred, quietly. "If we are wide-awake when the *Mary Ann* comes in we may have better luck than in the last venture."

"Go on with your story," said Mr. Proctor, impatient of these interruptions.

"I managed to get my ear under the window for another ten minutes. But they had slipped into another line of business. I picked up, though, that they would make their landing on Turtle Island, and have their shore agent on hand to take off the goods. The signal to be three lights in a triangle at the fore-top."

"But that's as good as gold!" exclaimed Harry Bains, jubilantly, slapping his knee. "It's to be answered from the shore, of course."

"Yes. The answer the same as the signal."

"Go on. You are not through yet," said Mr. Proctor.

"You can bet I kept an eye on my game. I held them at last, on board the Cunard steamer, the *Asia*, bound for England and a market. Their friend, Tompkins, was down to see them off. But I did not find it convenient to pick up any more points."

"You have done very well," replied Mr. Proctor, approvingly.

By way of changing the subject, Fred asked lightly:

"Did any of you ever hear of a craft called the Monsoon? I am growing curious about it. It must have gone ashore fifteen years ago according to the mate of the *Triton*. And Jim Bundy spoke of it when he saw me. My face seemed to call up some shred of memory to his empty brain."

"The thunder, you say!" cried old Tom. "The Monsoon!"

"What about the Monsoon?" came a deep voice from the door.

They all hastily turned. There stood the handsome sailor, Jack Bunce, his face full of interest.

"What do you know about her?" asked old Tom, anxiously.

"I sailed in her once, Captain Carstairs commanding. She went out again under a new master. The sea swallowed her. She was never heard of again."

"How long ago was that?"

"A matter of fifteen or sixteen years."

A significant look passed between Tom and Harry Bains. There was excitement in the old man's face. He looked again at the sailor.

"Did she come ashore on this coast?" asked the sailor.

"A ship struck here fifteen years ago," answered Harry Bains. "She landed but two passengers. The raging sea didn't leave a nail that she could be told by."

"But the passengers?"

"One was a baby. That is him," laying his hand on the boy's head. "The other was a sailor. But the sea washed his brain clean of memory. Left it as blank as a fresh sheet of paper. He had to begin life fresh."

"That's odd," said Jack Bunce. "Was his name gone, too?"

"Yes," replied Tom. "He sails now under new colors."

"What sort of a looking tar was he?"

"A thin, wiry fellow," answered Harry. "All skin and bone; light hair and eyes, and a nose as sharp as a corkscrew."

Jack stood holding by the door-frame, in deep thought for several minutes. They all looked curiously toward him, without breaking the silence.

"Does he still answer to the roll-call of life?" he at length queried.

"Yes."

"Whereaway?"

"He keeps the Red Lion Inn, at Crockettstown, twenty miles from here."

"I must get my weather-eye on the chap. He may, and he mayn't be an old shipmate," responded Jack.

Fred took an early opportunity to escape from the room, and a few moments later had an interview with Rose Darlington on the beach.

Turning toward the hotel he suddenly found himself face to face with Will Howard, who was regarding him with no pleased expression.

"I am afraid you need a lesson yet, my friend," he said. "I saw you speaking with a young lady whom I decidedly object to your annoying."

"Certainly," was Fred's quiet reply. "When Miss Darlington expresses herself as annoyed by me, you shall see no more of it."

"No subterfuge, sir. Whether she says it or not, she thinks it. If you will continue to insult her, I shall protect her from insult."

"Very well," replied Fred, in a cool tone. "Any time you wish. Shall it be life-boat service now? Or will you prefer some other mode?"

"You may save your insolence," exclaimed Will, enraged. "We shall see if I do not get even with you yet."

"All right," said Fred, lightly. "Any time and any weapon. I'm your man."

He walked on, leaving his antagonist pale with anger.

CHAPTER XVII.

GETTING EVEN.

"TRY and get back before night, Fred," said old Tom Halyard. "You know that you are to go on that business for Mr. Proctor to-morrow, and you will need a good night's sleep."

"I can row there and back by six o'clock, and not half try. I haven't had a good tussle with the oars

these two weeks now, and it is about time I was getting my hand in practice again."

"No fear of you, boy," answered the old man, looking on him with pride. "There are not many can beat you at oar or tiller."

Fred laughed. Yet a flush of conscious pride came into his face. In fact, old Tom Halyard's praise was worth something. He did not lavish it lightly or indiscriminately.

The boy walked away with his swinging step and erect bearing. The old man's eyes were fixed upon him with a satisfaction, into which there slowly came a look of sadness. He shook his head gravely.

"I don't like this Monsoon business," he muttered. "A ship that's been buried for fifteen years ought to be settled in the 'arth; but here comes this dead ship up again, like a ghost, to haunt my old age. But I can trust Fred, I can trust Fred—I know he will stick to the old man."

Fred walked on briskly. He turned into a street leading to the inlet. Here he encountered Mr. Darlington, who was advancing with his stately stride, his hat in his hand, and his ample brow exposed to the air.

"Ah! glad to see you, Fred," he exclaimed. "Where have you been these days past?"

"Out of the city, Mr. Darlington," Fred quietly answered. "You will excuse me, Mr. Darlington. I am in something of a hurry to-day."

"Certainly, certainly," was the response. "Don't let me detain you."

As he spoke Fred noticed a different expression come upon his face, a flushed, annoyed, half angry look. His eyes were bent down the street.

The boy turned and saw approaching a thin, stooping figure, with a strangely pallid face. He recognized him at a glance as the elder passenger of the Triton.

The lad walked onward, leaving the old gentleman standing in the midst of the pavement, looking after him with a strangely rapt regard.

"I am right," he muttered. "Amos Yarnall knew the face. If I can only prove it now! If I must be beggared I would much rather trust myself in the boy's hands, than in those of this graveyard ghoul, this bloodsucking Amos Yarnall."

"Thank you," came a voice at his side. He had spoken these last words unwittingly loud. "You are disposed to be highly complimentary."

It was Amos Yarnall, who had returned. Mr. Darlington was, for the moment, disconcerted.

"What do you want?" he asked, in a harsh tone, assumed to hide his feeling of shame.

"Nothing particular," was the reply, given with an assumption of indifference. "Who was the boy that just left you?"

"A ghost," replied the latter, meaningly. "A shadow of the past before which Amos Yarnall trembles. Beach City is, just now, full of ghosts, my friend."

"What nonsense is this?" asked Yarnall, angrily.

"The boy is only a shadow, whom I have conjured up to warn you that you had better moderate your claim. How much less are you disposed to take after seeing that face?"

"Not a cent," was the angry reply. "I will have all my son's just rights."

"You might have that and not be very rich," replied Mr. Darlington, in a tone of aggravating satire. "Good-day, Mr. Yarnall. I may soon make you that promised visit."

He walked away with his proud step, leaving his questioner in a state of mingled anger and alarm, and muttering to himself in a strangely-absorbed manner.

Meanwhile, Fred was making swift headway up the broad, inner channel, the same which had been followed during the memorable chase of the smugglers.

He had noticed, for some time, a sail, which seemed to be moving through the inner channels which permeated the marsh.

It was a large, strong fishing-boat, with an unusual show of canvas. Fred recognized it at a glance as belonging to Tim Grady, a fisherman, between whom and himself there was no love lost.

It was now but a short distance from him, and he suddenly noticed two things. First, that the fisherman was accompanied by Will Howard. Secondly, that if they continued on that course he would be run down.

"Down with your helm!" he fiercely shouted. "Do you want to cut me in two? Down with your helm, I say!"

The steersman of the other craft moved his helm, but he gave it the wrong sheer. Instead of avoiding the skiff, it pointed directly toward it, not two boat-lengths distant.

In a moment the powerful fishing-boat struck his light skiff nearly amidships. A grinding, rending, crashing noise succeeded. The boat was cut nearly in tow, and rolled under its powerful antagonist—Fred saving himself by a quick leap overboard at the instant of the collision.

He started to swim toward the island, which was not far distant.

But in a minute more the sail-boat glided between him and this refuge, Will Howard standing erect in it, oar in hand.

"Back!" he cried, savagely. "You are not going to get ashore so easily as that. I am going to give you a swim for your health. Straight down the inlet with you if you want to save your head from acquaintance with this oar."

A glance told Fred that he meant it. The quick-witted lad obeyed this stern mandate. He waited time to think.

He continued to swim down the center of the channel, the swift boat playing about him, but he suddenly threw up his arms, and went down beneath the water as helplessly as a stone.

"By Heaven!" cried Will, in alarm, "the fellow is drowning. I don't want that. We must save him."

"He will be up again," the fisherman coolly replied. "They always rise."

The course of the boat was shifted so as to bring it near where Fred had sunk. The man was right—he rose again just as they came opposite.

"Pull him in!" cried Will, grasping him by the collar.

The fisherman came to his assistance, and in a moment Fred was lifted from the water, a limp, dripping, apparently lifeless form, and laid flat in the bottom of the boat.

Picking up a rope he stepped back to where Fred lay, and bent over him with the purpose of binding his arms.

But he calculated without his host. Suddenly as if an earthquake had opened beneath him the recumbent figure half-rose, grappled the stooping fisherman by the legs, and with a sudden, peculiar lift, hurled him headlong over the side of the boat into the waters of the inlet.

In a moment more Fred stood upright, looking down on Will Howard, who shrank as from an apparition.

"It is my turn now," exclaimed Fred. "You've had your play. I'll take a hand in the game."

They were already fifty yards from the fisherman, who was slowly swimming after them.

Will Howard rose as Fred approached him. In a moment they had grappled, and were struggling with all their strength for the mastery.

Fred stood like a rock tearing himself loose from his reeling antagonist, and giving the latter a surge from which he vainly sought to recover. With a cry of alarm he plunged headlong over the side into the foaming water.

"Isn't the shoe on the other foot now?" asked Fred, tauntingly. "Have you any commands for Beach City? I'm bound straight there."

Howard had risen spluttering and cursing, threatening Fred with dire vengeance. The latter kept his boat steadily down the channel, leaving them to

do as they pleased. His last glimpse of them revealed them both swimming for the island, a decidedly crestfallen pair.

CHAPTER XIX.

A TURTLE ISLAND SUNSET.

The point at which they came ashore was some five miles up the inlet.

They therefore proceeded slowly down the island shore, calculating to reach the point opposite the city just before sunset, and to signal for some one to set them across the inlet.

"Suppose you tramp across and signal the boats."

"I have some matches here," said Grady. "But they've been well soaked. I doubt if they'll burn. If we could only strike a fire we'd be all right."

He exposed the matches to the passing breeze to dry them. He had but three or four of them, and it was not safe to run any risks. It was a half-hour ere he ventured to try them, first gathering a mass of dry sea-weed and fragments of wood, the shreds of old wrecks, perhaps.

One, two, they fizzed and went out. The third kindled, but ere the wood was well lit the wind curled under his sheltering hat, and carried away the spluttering flame.

But a single match remained. Grady picked up a round-bodied sea-shell that lay near him, and struck the match on its interior lip, which was roughened by a thin deposit of coral. Holding the burning wood deep within the cavity until it had got well kindled, he stuffed into the opening a pinch of the dry sea-weed.

It kindled. It flamed up. He buried the shell under his heap of dry fuel, which at once burst into bright flame.

They both sprung to their feet with a cry of delight. The signal was made. It must be seen across the inlet.

Their cry was answered. At the same instant the sound of oars was heard, just off-shore. A boat was coming rapidly to their rescue.

In a moment more it was within the circle of light from their bright flame.

"All right," cried a cheering voice. "Come round here out of reach of the surf. We'll have you off in the twinkling of a cat's foot."

"How did you catch our light so quick?" asked Will. "Were you out fishing?"

"No. We were sent here after you."

"Who by?"

"Fred Halyard. He saw you before dark."

He had heard from Fred the whole story. Only for Fred, in fact, they would have been left to make a night of it. Not a boatman would have put out to their rescue.

The speaker informed Will Howard of this when he fell to bitter cursing of his successful antagonist, and advised him, also, to hold his tongue, if he did not wish to spend the night upon the island.

This threat effectually silenced him. He became mute and abashed as he entered the boat, too thoroughly quelled to have another word to say.

There was some covert laughter among the boatmen at the inlet house when Will stepped ashore from the rescuing boat, with but a sorry vestige of his former pride of bearing.

CHAPTER XX.

FRED TAKES THE REINS.

FRED HALYARD was again enjoying the hospitalities of Crockettstown, at the expense of Mr. Proctor; for that village was not in the habit of dispensing its hospitalities without being well paid for them.

On this occasion he took the bull by the horns—as the proverb goes—putting up at the Red Lion Inn, as a guest of the redoubtable Jim Bundy.

He took several opportunities to engage Bundy in conversation, in which he led the way back to the past, and skillfully strove to extract from him some details of his previous history.

Nor was his host loth to talk, but his whole life seemed to be embraced in his residence at Crocketts-town. Whenever prior times were referred to he would fall into an uncertain, groping, painfully-confused mental state that was pitiable to witness. He appeared like one seeking to make his way in utter darkness through a scene which he had known of old, but could not recall.

Fred spoke of the Monsoon in an indifferent way, as a vessel of which he had heard; meanwhile closely watching the face of his host for the effect of this name.

It was received with a start and a flush of color. Bundy sprung to his feet and rapidly walked the floor.

"You cannot remember me," replied Fred. "I was a child on the Monsoon. You and I only were saved from the wreck."

"You!" exclaimed Bundy, starting with surprise. "I have heard that story. Were you the child? Old Tom Halyard took the child."

"I am Fred Halyard, the Ocean Waif."

Jim Bundy was evidently pleased with this meeting. But the partly opened door of his old life had closed again. No further recollections came back to him from the past.

These conversations were repeated, but with no better result. Fred's face continued associated in his mind with the name of the Monsoon. But his recollection of the latter was simply a name—he could not give it shape or locality.

The night was fine, cool and clear, which Fred selected for his covert prowl through the ground-floor and subterranean precincts of the Red Lion. He was provided with a dark lantern, had muddled his shoes in a pair of large stockings, and was ready for his nocturnal adventure, several hours before it would be safe to undertake it.

Boy-like, he concluded to spend the intervening hours in getting a modicum of sleep, convinced, in his own mind, that he would wake up when the proper time came.

He rose heedfully, and had his hand on the knob of his room door ere it occurred to him that if it was he they were afraid of, his door might be watched. Indeed, it might be possible that, if it were smuggling agents at work, he might be subjected to personal injury.

"If Jim Bundy has got that double-twist eye of his on my door," thought Fred, "I'll have to circumvent him. There are more ways of leaving a room than by the door. These windows, now, are handy."

There were two windows, overlooking the nearly flat roof of the porch. This was upheld by several wooden pillars, and extended out about five feet from the house.

Fred lost no time in stepping through his raised window to the porch roof. Along this he made his way to the nearest end, the one overlooking the stable yard. His suspicions were correct. There stood a light wagon, drawn by a single horse. A faint light from the house fell upon the wagon, at the rear of which two men seemed to be busied. At a glance he recognized one of these as his host.

The affair was growing interesting. Fred moved back with the utmost caution to the opposite end of the porch. Here he was quite removed from observation by the men he had seen. In an instant, with an agility for which he was somewhat noted, he swung himself over the corner of the roof, and grasped with his feet the round wooden post. It did not take the active lad a minute to get a firm hold of the latter and slide down to the porch.

With uniminished caution Fred sought the other end of the porch, and, under cover of a clump of bushes, made his way to a point not far removed from the wagon. He carefully stooped behind his shelter as he heard voices seemingly approaching from the house. The dim light again shone into the yard, revealing Jim Bundy and a stoutish companion, whom Fred had not seen before. They had

certain bundles in their arms, which they carefully arranged in the wagon.

"That finishes," said Bundy. "You had better cover them with your oil-cloth blanket. It might rain."

As he spoke he proceeded to spread a large waterproof covering over the packages in his wagon, whose curtains he also drew down and tightly secured.

"How pretty we've sold our spy up-stairs," remarked Bundy, with a low laugh. "Won't I be innocent to-morrow morning! I know the boy thinks he is a very razor for sharpness. Are you all ready now?"

"Yes."

"You had better come in first, and try some hard stuff."

"Don't keer if I do," returned the man, very readily. "It never hurts a man to warm up his in'ards."

The two returned to the house, closing the door behind them, and shutting out the dim gleam which came from some light within.

What happened during the interval of their absence we will not just here relate. They returned after a few minutes, the driver mounting into his wagon and taking the reins.

"Give my respects to that young gentleman," he said. "I hope he'll have a good night's sleep and pleasant dreams."

"Drive careful," cautioned Bundy. "The fellow might wake."

The driver did so, walking his horse until he had got some distance down the street. Here, turning into a road leading northward, he drove more rapidly, chuckling quietly to himself.

"I've a notion the spy's badly sold," he cogitated. "What these goods are I know no more than the man in the moon. There's something underhand about them, that's certain. But all my business is to fetch them safely into New York, and hold my tongue afterward."

The sun just showed his red limb at the horizon when the wagon arrived in front of a low, long inn, about which a man or two were already moving.

"That's clever. I thought they'd be around. Must wet my whistle before I go another step."

He alighted from the wagon and greeted the men, who followed him into the house.

The driver's whistle must have been a very long or very dry one, for it took a considerable time to become thoroughly moistened. He would have made better time, perhaps, if he had known all that was going on outside while he was thus occupied within.

Hardly had he left the wagon ere a slight commotion took place in his cargo. The oil-cloth covering slowly lifted, inch by inch, a curly head gradually becoming uncovered. A pair of bright eyes took a keen observation of the general look of things, and then, slowly and carefully, the form followed the head. It was the figure of Fred Halyard, who had been taking a free ride, cozily coiled away under the oil-cloth covering of the goods.

He looked out heedfully from the front of the wagon. The coast was clear. Without an instant's hesitation Fred grasped the reins, which had been loosely tucked in at the front of the wagon. With a slight hint the horses stepped lightly away.

"Good-by," said Fred, aloud. "Excuse me for not waiting, but I'm in a fearful old hurry to-day. I'll call for you on my way back, if I come this road."

A touch with the whip and the horse was off at a rapid pace down the road. Then what Fred had expected happened. A cry of alarm was heard from inside the bar-room, and the men came rushing hastily out. The horse seemed to them to have started of his own accord.

He had not got more than a half-mile from the inn ere the driver was upon his track in a light wagon, drawn by a horse of considerable speed. One of the

men from the inn occupied the carriage with the driver.

Fred continued to whip up, hoping to reach some town, or obtain assistance of some kind ere he was overtaken. But the road was here lonely, and ere he had made a mile and a half from the inn, the pursuers were immediately behind him.

"Hold up there, you hound!" sung out the wrathful driver, "if you don't want to be whipped within an inch of your life."

"Hallo! stranger, what's up?" replied Fred, checking his horse. "Want to take a ride? I don't care if I do give you a lift, being's it's you."

CHAPTER XXI.

AN INTERVIEW.

BUT we must leave Fred Halyard for awhile in his somewhat critical situation, and return to Beach City, where the movements of certain other friends demand attention.

Mr. Darlington was slowly feeling his way toward a plan for disconcerting Amos Yarnall, whom he so thoroughly despised and hated, that the imminent risk of losing his fortune in another direction troubled him less than it would have done.

Yarnall sought the city for him in vain.

It was during this period that Mr. Darlington was honored by a visit from Will Howard, of whom he had seen nothing for several days.

He had no idea of losing Rose Darlington. She was the only daughter of a very wealthy man, which was to him a feature of the case of very great importance.

It was for this reason that he asked for an interview with Mr. Darlington as soon as he was sure that his face had grown presentable. He felt that he had shown the cloven foot too freely to his betrothed. He must try and retrace his lost ground.

"I ought to have been looking you up, Will," observed Mr. Darlington. "But I have been very much occupied, and I didn't fancy that you were seriously under the weather. Got a little too much sun-scorched, did you not?"

"Something of that kind," replied Will, whose face had regained its normal condition. "There are some days here in which the sun does burn furiously. I am all right now, though."

"I perceive that," returned Mr. Darlington.

"I wished to see you," continued Will, with a slight hesitation, "in regard to Rose. I fancy we are both old enough to marry."

"I imagine so," rejoined Mr. Darlington, mentally deciding that Will was looking rather too old for his years.

"But I cannot get her to see it in that light. She continues to put off the period of our marriage—I do not see why. There is no reason why we should delay it for months or years yet. I wish you would use your influence with Rose in this matter. She is unpleasantly indifferent about it."

"Why, certainly, Will," replied Mr. Darlington. "Not that I am in the habit of using my influence, with Rose, in anything that may affect her happiness. But if you wish it I shall certainly speak to her."

"I would be greatly obliged," said Will. "I think we are waiting ridiculously long."

The young man was fearing that there might be a slip between the cup and the lip, of his hopes.

"There is one thing which I should mention to you in this connection," said Mr. Darlington, hesitatingly. "It is not a pleasant subject to me, but it is no more than just. You will keep what I say a secret, Will?"

"Certainly," replied Will, with an unpleasant mental start. What could this ominous beginning mean?

"I wish you to rest under no wrong impression in regard to my wealth," continued Mr. Darlington. "My property came to me by will, you may know. But there are other claimants who have lately appeared. If their claims are made good, Will, which

I very much fear they may be, I shall have to commence life over again."

Will sat in open-mouthed surprise. He could not muster a word in reply.

The start, indeed, was so great that Will Howard did not recover from its effect during the remainder of this interview, which he brought to an end as soon as he politely could.

Mr. Darlington looked after him curiously as he walked away.

"It is an experiment worth trying," he murmured, shaking his head. "I fear Will Howard's faith will not stand the fire. I have mistrusted him for some time and I begin to think that his defection will not break Rose's heart. We shall soon see if I have misjudged him."

CHAPTER XXII.

A SLIGHT SURPRISE.

WE left Fred Halyard in a somewhat critical situation. He had just answered the imperious demand of the driver to stop, with a response full of cool assurance, but which enraged that individual still more.

"Get out of there, you infernal young thief!" he yelled. "Blame you, you shall find that it is not a trifling matter to steal a man's horse and wagon. Get out, I say!"

He had leaped on the shafts and caught Fred by the arm. The latter sat docilely, without the slightest effort to escape.

"Come out with you jackanapes!"

"Don't think I'll get out just now," drawled Fred. "It's comfortable here."

"You won't, hey?" exclaimed the portly driver, tugging at the boy's arm. "I'll know the reason why you won't."

"I'll tell you the reason, if that's all you want to know," returned Fred, in his provokingly cool tone. "Maybe I'd best whisper it, though. There are some things sound better in a whisper."

The angry driver seemed to suddenly come to the same conclusion as Fred. There was that in the boy's manner that admonished him to caution.

He bent his ear, into which Fred said something in a whisper. Whatever it was, it brought about an immediate change of base.

"I won't keep you any longer," said the driver to his companion. "The boy agrees to go quietly with me. I am much obliged for your help in catching the runaway. I'll take care of this chap."

In a minute more they were driving away from each other, the wagon with Fred and his captor jogging at a dog-trot along the road.

For a full half-hour they continued onward in perfect silence, so far as speech was concerned, though Fred kept up a low whistling accompaniment to their journey, or perhaps to quiet the nerves of his companion.

The sun was now getting well up in the sky. The day had fairly set in. On the fresh morning breeze came a very evident whiff of salt air. Their road had, in fact, been at an angle toward the ocean, and from the point which they had now reached Beach City was not more than six or eight miles distant. From this point the road diverged more inland.

But just ahead of them a side road appeared which led directly toward the sea. It was the continuation of the causeway to Beach City.

They were just opposite this when Fred suddenly grasped the reins, and brought the horse to a dead halt.

"You were going the wrong way," he cried. "This is your road."

"You seem to know a blamed lot about it," returned the driver, with an oath. "Just you take my advice, young man, and keep quiet, if you don't want to get into trouble."

"But this is your road," persisted Fred.

"I don't think it is, then," retorted the driver, starting the horse on again.

"But you will only have to turn back!" remonstrated Fred. "What's the use of going wrong when you're told?"

"You are very ready with your reasons," said the driver, surprised at this persistence. "What is your reason for wanting to take that road?"

"Of course I've got a reason," returned Fred, drawing one hand from his pocket. "I think it's a mighty convincing reason too."

The driver agreed with him when he turned round and saw that Fred's hand held a pistol.

"It's my dad's old revolver," explained Fred. "He was afraid I might get into trouble, you see, and thought I'd best take along the shooting-iron."

The frightened driver hastened to turn the horse in the road, and to take the side road to the sea.

It was about nine o'clock that morning when the wagon with its two occupants halted in front of the Center House, at Beach City, at which establishment Mr. Proctor boarded. That gentleman, in fact, was standing on the porch of the hotel when the wagon drove up, and saw with surprise that one of its occupants was his young agent, Fred Halyard.

"There," exclaimed Fred springing to the ground. "here is somebody for you to take care of, Mr. Proctor. He takes cold mighty easy, so I'd advise you to keep him out of the draft."

"But, what have you in the wagon?"

"Some dry-goods from the Red Lion," answered Fred, a reply which was enigmatical to everybody but Mr. Proctor.

"And now," said Fred, to the driver. "I think I'd best give this shooting-iron back to day. I've been fearful afraid it might go off, with that twitchy finger of mine. And that wouldn't have been a bit healthy for you, you know."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A GLIMPSE AT THE PAST.

THE season at Beach City was near its end.

Only the relics of the season remained, those who knew from past experience that warm weeks would follow this August chill, and who had no special reason for a hasty flight back to the city.

Among these were our friends, Mr. Darlington and his daughter, Will Howard, and others who have appeared in our pages. Among the latter were Jack Bunc, the handsome sailor, and Amos Yarnall and his son, the re-cued passengers.

Amos Yarnall, who had been in constant search for a week past for Fred Halyard, met that young gentleman seated in a ship's chair on the narrow strip of greensward in front of his adopted father's residence. Old Tom sat beside him, a short pipe in his mouth, from which the smoke curled upward in wreaths which threatened to envelop him in their vapory softness.

"There's some'at satisfyin' about a good pipe," remarked the old man with a sigh of pleasure. "I've see'd the time more'n once when a whiff of 'oaky smoke was worth— E? Did you speak, sir?"

This to Amos Yarnall, who had just stopped. This gentleman withdrew his eyes with a seeming effort from their fixed stare at Fred's face, a look which our young friend did not altogether relish.

"I only gave you the good morning," replied Mr. Yarnall. "You have a pretty place here."

"Rayther, rayther," returned old Tom, with a gratified look. "The s'il'e ain't the best goin', but I'm a bit proud o' my grass."

"You have reason," said Mr. Yarnall, leaning heavily upon the fence. "Beach City is rather barren as a whole."

"Aren't you the gentleman as come ashore in the Triton?" asked old Tom.

"Yes, sir. That was one of my life experiences. I have made more than one narrow escape in my time."

"There's not'jin' wu'ss than a wreck" was old Tom's positive reply. "A man's nerves and muscles are precious little use when the sea gets on a

rampage. He's got to trust then to chance and Providence—eh, Fred?"

"I must walk down to the Center House," remarked Fred. "I have a slight matter of business there."

"All right, all right, boy. Take the lad's seat, Mr. Yarnall—that is if you don't mind having a bit of chat."

"A likely young man that," responded Mr. Yarnall, nodding his head after Fred. "I've noticed him before. Is he your son, sir?"

"He calls me father," returned old Tom, with a smile of pride. "If I wanted to sail under false colors I suppose I might safely claim him."

"You are not his father, then?"

"He's a son o' the sea. Fred is. A bit of flotsam. But he's been mine a'most since afore he could talk, so I reckon I'll hang on to him."

"Did he come ashore in a wreck?" asked Mr. Yarnall, eagerly.

"Yes. Fifteen years ago come next January. Lucky for him he fell into old Tom Halyard's keepin'. I've taught him some'at worth a man's knowing."

"What was the name of the vessel?" queried Mr. Yarnall, with eager interest.

"Nobody knows. She went into chips. And her crew was locked up in the depths of the sea, and their secrets buried with them. Only a single soul come ashore along with Fred, and the greedy sea washed his memory clean out of him."

A smile of pallid satisfaction slid over Mr. Yarnall's white face. If this was the boy on whom Darlington depended to defeat him, it would perhaps prove a trust in a broken stick.

He eagerly continued his questions and old Tom, nothing loth, entered into the full details of the wreck and rescue, incited thereto by the intense interest of his auditor.

"What vessel it was is one of the mysteries that'll never be found out," concluded Tom. "We've a hint of a smuggler as come ashore about that time; but nothing to show that the boy was aboard the smuggler. This seems to be a lad fit to coast for smugglers. Here's the Triton now, with her brains dashed out."

"Smugglers!" ejaculated Mr. Yarnall, with a surprise that was mingled with some deeper feeling.

"Yes. Haven't you heard what all Beach City knows, that she landed some contraband stuffs a night or two afore she come ashore?"

"I heard of the smuggling," replied Mr. Yarnall, with the same peculiar look. "But I did not hear that it was ascribed to the Triton."

"You will hear of it then, if you live many days longer. There's likely to be some questions asked. The thieves were cute, but the honest folks were cuter. The contraband stuffs are in the hands of the customs this blessed minute."

Mr. Yarnall's pallor deepened.

"How is it that I have not heard of it?" he asked.

"Must have shet your ears," was the reply. "It's leakin' out everywhere. A whole wagon-load's been nabbed, and the driver's enjoyin' himself behind a set o' good iron bars."

Strangely Mr. Yarnall was as deeply interested in this information as in that concerning Fred Halyard. It seemed to be an hour of not very pleasant surprises to him, though old Tom, in his spirit of garrulous chat, had failed to notice his visitor's imperfectly-concealed emotion.

But he could not help observing something odd in Mr. Yarnall's reception of the news about the smugglers.

"I wonder if he was mixed in it?" the old man asked himself, after his visitor had left. "He was aboard the Triton. He might have been one of the contrabandists."

Mr. Yarnall walked quickly on through the main street of Beach City.

"I must see that Jim Bundy without delay," he muttered. "His memory may have returned. If

so his tongue must be locked. It would be ruinous if that boy could be identified as George Bruce's son."

But he had, just now, other business in hand of more pressing importance. Hasteing to the telegraph office he addressed a carefully-worded dispatch to J. W. Tompkins, Son & Co., of lower Broadway, New York.

They hastened to send a cable dispatch to Liverpool, with instructions to stop the sailing of the ship Mary Ann until further advices.

Their telegram came too late. With very little delay the following return message was delivered into their hands:

"Ship Mary Ann, Carstairs commanding, cleared yesterday. Went to sea last night, and is beyond our reach."

There was no help for it. The new smuggling venture could not be stopped.

While Mr. Yarnall was thus engaged, and old Tom Hilyard was doing all the injury he could to the pecuniary prospects of his adopted son, through his thoughtless garrulity, others of our characters were working in Fred's favor. Mr. Darlington, that same morning, had taken the accommodation train for Philadelphia, accompanied by the sailor, Jack Bunce.

He and the sailor left the cars at Crockettstown. Evidently Jim Bundy was the ulterior object of this journey.

They proceeded, however, with something of the same circumspection which Fred had shown on a similar occasion. Instead of going directly to the Red Lion they made their way to the Black Horse. Here the rival landlord was questioned closely as to the mental condition of his opponent in business.

He had no hesitation in telling all he knew—was rather eager than otherwise—but what he knew proved very discouraging to the purposes of his visitors. Jim Bundy had, now and then, shown slight symptoms of remembrance of his former life. But he had never recollect ed anything of importance. And, generally, it was all completely lost to him.

His village crony, Tony Pike, might know something. He had hopped over many a glass of half-and-half with Bundy; and when a man's head is afloat in good ale sometimes his brain loosens up as well as his tongue.

"I'll introduce you to Tony, if you care, gentlemen."

"We had best go at once to the Red Lion. But if you will ask the man you speak of to step down that way, it might be worth his trouble."

"Certainly, certainly!" replied the landlord, eagerly.

Mr. Darlington and Jack Bunce proceeded together to the Red Lion.

Agreeably to their previous arrangement Jack kept in the background on entering the bar-room of that hostelry, leaving Mr. Darlington to do the talking. He ensconced himself behind a newspaper in a corner of the room, which was then only tenanted by the landlord.

"Can I have a few minutes' private conversation with you?" asked Mr. Darlington.

The landlord slightly changed color. The news of the capture of the contraband goods had but lately reached Crockettstown, in its outflow from its center at Beach City. He was naturally nervous on being addressed in this way by a stranger. He took a second look at the tall fellow with the sailor cap, in the corner. But Jack was too completely hidden behind his paper shield to be made out.

"Could you give me the name of the vessel in which you were wrecked? Do you recall the name of a ship called the Monsoon?"

"I don't know," said Bundy, doubtfully. "That word sometimes comes into my head. So do other words. But they are only floating words. I can't place them. I wish I could."

They were interrupted at this moment by the en-

trance of a slim, somewhat seedy-looking customer, with a well-blossomed nose, and a general look about him of the consummate bar-room loafer.

"Is this Tony Pike?" asked Mr. Darlington.

"Yes, sir; yes, sir," eagerly rep'lied the intruder.

"Sit down, then. I sent for you. I think he may help us out, Mr. Bundy."

"I doubt that," replied Bundy.

"You and Mr. Bundy have often had confidential talks?" asked Mr. Darlington of the new-comer.

"Often and often, sir. More times nor I could mention."

"And has he ever spoken of things that happened before he came to this place?"

Tony looked to the landlord, as if for a cue.

"Go on," said the latter. "If you know anything, let it out."

"I've heerd him say somethin' 'bout a smug—"

"No, no, belay that!" cried the landlord, hastily. "Have I said anything about a ship called the Monsoon?"

Tony hesitated, and seemed disinclined to speak.

"Guess I ain't heerd nothing," he at length said.

"Was not the Monsoon a smuggler?" asked Mr. Darlington, looking him sternly in the face.

"He was only a sailor. He hadn't nothing to do with the smugglin'," returned Tony. "But he did say once that he'd sailed on the Monsoon, and that the forecastle hands had odd notions 'bout her cargo."

"Do you remember it now?" asked Mr. Darlington turning quickly to the landlord. "Do you remember a passenger named George Bruce?"

"Bruce!" cried the landlord, with a slight start. "Bruce! There was a lad here lately—a tall, good-looking, bright lad—somehow I seem to fix the name Bruce to him—it was he that was wrecked with me in the—"

He paused—hesitated—it was gone. He had been on the very point of naming the wreck.

"Do you know me?" came in a clear, loud voice from his right.

Jim Bundy turned with a start. Mr. Darlington's companion had dropped his paper and stood before him—a tall, vigorous, bronzed man, with "sailor" written on every angle of his form.

The landlord looked for a moment, with startled eyes, into the face before him. He then fell back a step as if he had seen a ghost.

"It's Jack Bunce, or I never reefed a topsail!" came in a half whisper from his lips.

"You're right there, old sea-horse!" roared Jack, as if in a gale of wind. "And, in spite of the false colors you're sailing under, you're Ned Thompson, or you're nobody—Slim Ned, as we used to call you."

A cry came from the landlord's lips, a cry in which a thousand emotions seemed to mingle. He pressed his hands to his head as if in fear it would burst with its rush of recollection.

"It's coming back! It's coming back!" he exclaimed. "Jack Bunce—Slim Ned—we sailed together in the old Canton, under Cap Carstairs—Handsome George, they called him."

"And you left the Canton to ship in—"

"In the Monsoon! In the Monsoon! I see it all now! It is like a map spread before me! We had a good run across the Atlantic. But we ventured too near the coast. We were wrecked. I can see the old craft drifting ashore, spite of sail and anchor. We had a passenger—George Bruce—and his son, a baby—and the child came ashore—I see it! I see it now!"

Mr. Darlington had been rapidly making note of these somewhat incoherent remarks. Further questions elicited but little more; the cloud seemed again settling. Hastily the questioner got him to sign this statement ere his recollection should be again gone. Getting the two others to witness it, he carefully put it away in his note-book.

"We are on the track," he said. "The Monsoon did sail from Liverpool, fifteen years ago last De-

cember. George Bruce and his son were on the passenger list—the only passengers, in fact. Nothing further was ever heard of her—the fact is, no very strict inquiry was made. The owners were satisfied with their insurance. No one made any earnest effort to seek George Bruce." A flush came into his face as he said this. "That the vessel wrecked on this coast in January of that winter was the Moonsoon there can be no doubt. The shipping list is in existence. I must learn if Edward Thompson was among her crew."

When Mr. Darlington sought the cars that afternoon, he left Jack Bunce behind him. The lost memory of the landlord might be still further restored. As he stepped into the train, he saw on the platform, just landed from an opposite train, the white face of Amos Yarnall.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A BOY'S LOVE.

AMOS YARNALL had a very different result from his visit to the Red Lion than that which had attended Mr. Darlington's inquiry. The cloud had again descended upon Jim Bundy's mind, not a fragment of information could be drawn from that closed closet of memory.

The landlord, however, was playing shy in his answers to this new visitor. He had been warned of a possible inquiry from this quarter, and advised against satisfying these inquiries. Mr. Darlington wished to keep Yarnall in the dark as much as possible.

The truth was that the sudden appearance of Jack Bunce had aroused Bundy's dormant memory—not fully, but to a certain extent, and the new-gained recollections had not really escaped him again. His lack of ability to answer Mr. Yarnall's questions was, therefore, more assumed than real, a fact which the latter was shrewd enough to perceive.

There was no doubt that this adopted son of Tom Halyard was the person with whom Mr. Darlington was seeking to counteract his claim. There began to be but little doubt in his mind that this lad was really the son of George Bruce. Yarnall was not slow to perceive the pointing of the finger of necessity. Fred Halyard was the peril in his path. The life of that youth stood between him and fortune. Dark thoughts began to float like shadows through the mind of the evil-souled schemer.

Meanwhile, time moved on at Beach City. The summer boarders had gone in mass back to their city homes. Many of the large hotels had closed for lack of customers. Only those whose leisure was abundant, and who fully recognized the fact that the first two weeks of September are often among the sultriest of the summer, lingered at the shore.

"That's a thundering fine haul you made, Fred," said Mr. Proctor, to our young friend. "A wagon-load of silks and satins is not to be sneezed at."

"Hardly a wagon-load," answered Fred.

"There's a clever show, anyhow. And very valuable goods. It would not pay these chaps to smuggle cheap materials."

"But have you heard of the Mary Ann? Has she sailed?"

"Yes. She cleared the evening of the day in which you captured the goods. The rogues on this side could not have had wind of our capture in time to stop her sailing."

"What next, then?" asked Fred. "Are you not going to nab Jim Bundy and the fisherman as accomplices?"

"Not yet. That would only be giving the cue to the head villains. I want the Mary Ann's cargo of contraband first. And I would like to catch that captain and mate in the act. Then we will be ready to descend on Tompkins & Co. like a thundercloud. But keep quiet about this business, my boy."

"Quiet as an oyster," returned Fred.

It was the afternoon of that same day that our young friend met Rose Darlington, on his return from an errand down the beach. Fred was dressed

in his best, and it was wonderful how well good clothes became him.

"I have gathered some shells for you, Miss Darlington, as I know how fond you are of this sea-spoil," he said, as he approached her.

"That is very kind," she gratefully replied. "I have had very bad fortune this morning. Please let me see them."

She opened her little basket, which she usually carried on her shell-hunting expeditions, ready to receive these contributions from her more active friend.

"I was over on the island yesterday," said the lad. "There are fewer shell hunters there, and the last storm threw things up freely. I gathered up some of the best."

He emptied his pockets into the open basket. Rose hastily picked up one of these shells—a beautifully coiled and colored specimen. A smile came upon her face as she looked at it.

"The idea of such color on our drab coast," she exclaimed. "This is decidedly tropical, Mr. Halyard. Now where did you get it? There is nothing like it in any of the Peach City shell stores."

"No, indeed; I got it on the coast," he laughingly replied.

"But not on our sands. I know our shells too well for that."

"You are too learned for me, that is very evident," he returned, with a merry laugh. "That shell came from the East India seas. I had it from a sailor on a passing vessel."

"And you thought of me!" she gratefully cried. "Now I am ever so much obliged. It is a rare beauty. It is a harp shell, Mr. Halyard—though I presume you know that—and one of the rarest species. I shall value that as your gift to my slender cabinet."

"I only wish it had been of more value. I should have been doubly happy to give it to you," he earnestly rejoined.

"It has value, in my eyes, both for its own worth, and as your gift," she warmly answered. "You are putting me under such hosts of obligations, Mr. Halyard. After saving my life—"

Fred caught her extended hands, the warm light of hope burning in his eyes. He drew her irresistibly toward him.

"We are but boy and girl yet," he said, in a whispering tone. "But we will be man and woman. I love you and will make myself worthy of you. Say that I love not quite in vain. Say that you will wait for me. Have I your answer, Rose?"

"Yes," she softly replied, yielding to his gentle force, as his hand slipped round her slender waist, his impassioned eyes looking down into her moist and love-lit orbs.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN UNEVEN FIGHT.

A WEEK and more had passed since the date of our last chapter. It was growing late in September. Summer had fairly vanished, and the chill of autumn was in the air, but still some scant visitors lingered at the shore.

Rose Darlington seemed in no hurry to return home; and her indulgent father consented to prolong his visit. He, in fact, had the same object in view as herself. That object was Fred Halyard. But it was Fred Halyard considered from very different points of view.

Will Howard was still at the shore, occupying his time in gunning and fishing, and keeping but scant intercourse with Mr. Darlington, none at all with his daughter. And as he did not fail to observe a certain intercourse between Rose and Fred Halyard his exasperation against that youth was redoubled.

Fred thus had two bitter enemies in Beach City—the second being Amos Yarnall, who was far the most dangerous foe, as being more ruthless and ut-

terly unsuspected. And from certain interviews between these two persons it seemed probable that they had discovered this mutual feeling.

Trouble of which he did not dream was evidently concocting for Fred Halyard. When he rowed Amos Yarnall up the inlet, one September afternoon, on a fishing excursion, he never imagined that he had in his boat his most deadly foe.

Yet if he had witnessed the close conference between the two conspirators that morning, or had noticed the care which Yarnall took to have the boat start from an unobserved point, he might not have been so mentally at ease.

As it was he rowed with a mind free from anxiety to the desired fishing-grounds, which were three or four miles up the inlet. Here the boat was anchored, and his passenger set to fishing in an easy, careless sort of way that was not likely to very soon empty the ocean of its finny inhabitants.

"You will not catch many unless you are more wide awake," remarked Fred. "They are here—plenty of them. But they don't come up to any man's whistle. I will show you how we coasters can coax them from the water."

Fred was preparing his own lines as he spoke. He now threw them in, and soon justified his boast by hauling up fish after fish, while yet Mr. Yarnall had not succeeded in getting one to the surface.

As night approached their boat showed very favorable results of the day's sport in the large number of fish which covered its bottom, their funny brightness shining like silver in the slant rays of the declining sun.

"I think we have done very well," said Mr. Yarnall, looking complacently at their treasures. "I fancy that I can set up a fine boast in Beach City of my skill as a fisherman, if you don't spoil it by telling the truth too openly."

"You can have all the credit," said Fred laughingly.

"Then they had best not know that you were with me," replied Mr. Yarnall, "or I will get very little credit for my day's work. Fortunately there have been no boats about here this afternoon."

"There comes one now," remarked Fred, pointing down the inlet.

Mr. Yarnall looked in the direction indicated. A quick gleam flashed across his face as he caught sight of a small boat, rowed by a single oarsman.

Fred looked up in surprise. It was with a deeper flush of indignation, that he saw the occupant of the intruding boat. The latter was no other than his foe, Will Howard.

"Fred's eyes rested on his face with a steady and rather fierce scrutiny which seemed to somewhat disconcert Will.

"Well, sir," remarked Fred, "one would think that you were anxious to see me, since you have taken the trouble to follow me here."

"You don't give me a fair chance to see you on the beach," replied Will.

"I don't remember taking any special trouble to avoid you. Or to meet you either, for that matter. I hardly think you are worth the trouble."

"Coward!" cried Will, fiercely. "You dare not meet me on solid ground." He sprung ashore to the hard sand bordering the stream. "This is no rocking boat, where you have a double advantage. I wish to Heaven I had brought a horsewhip so that I could give you the chastisement such a dog deserves."

"Don't trouble yourself to get in too great a rage," returned Fred as he quietly rose, and stepped from the boat. "I did not intend to soil my hands with you. But, as you are so very eager, and as I remember that I promised you the whipping you deserve—"

He did not finish, for his infuriated antagonist at this instant aimed a fierce blow at him which Fred only avoided by a quick stoop. He returned the compliment by catching Will by the shoulder, ere he recovered from the impulse of the blow, and, with a

quick trip, laying him at full length, prostrate on the sands.

Will was up and at him again, like a maddened animal. He was a trained boxer, and took care, now, to avoid the danger which his impetuosity had led him into before. He had, in this, the advantage of Fred, who knew but little of boxing, but who made up by alertness and activity for the skill of his antagonist.

Amos Yarnall had been standing at a short distance, resting upon his oar. He now came nearer as he saw them struggling in a fierce wrestle. Will Howard's rage had given his foe the exact opportunity he wished. If no boxer, Fred Halyard was the best wrestler on the coast. Howard, too, had some experience at wrestling, and was much the heavier and stronger of the two, so that Fred found him a tougher antagonist than he had expected.

Up and down the sands they staggered, clasped in a strained embrace, lifting, bending, tripping, now the one, now the other, having the best of it, but both still keeping their feet.

For a moment Will Howard gained an advantage, forcing his foe back step after step. Fred sought vigorously to recover, and had braced his right foot firmly on a hard knoll of sand, when he felt the foot suddenly kicked from under him. It was Amos Yarnall, who had taken the mean chance to trip him at this critical instant.

Fred staggered backward, dragging his antagonist with him. But, even as he fell, he played an old wrestler's trick of his on Will Howard, which quite turned the tables. Flinging his left foot backward he gained a moment's leverage on the sand, and, in that instant, with a quick twist, the position of the wrestlers was reversed. They fell heavily together on the narrow beach, Will Howard under and Fred on top.

It was but an instant of triumph. It was followed by a whistling sound and a loud crash. A feeling ran through Fred's nerves as if a rock had fallen with crushing force upon his brain. Then his senses vanished, his grasp relaxed, he rolled over and over on the sands with the impulse given by Will Howard's effort to rise.

And there stood Amos Yarnall with lifted oar, as if ready for another blow. It was the butt of the oar which had fallen on Fred's head, seemingly with force enough to crush in his skull.

The two villains looked at each other, and then at the insensible and bleeding form, with dilated eyes. Amos Yarnall took a step forward and again raised the oar. His arm was grasped by Will.

"Would you murder him?" the latter hissed, through his closed teeth. "It is satisfaction we want, not murder. I doubt if you have not done for him already."

"Don't get excited now, he is only stunned," returned the cool villain. "I may have hit a little harder than I intended, but he will come to before a half-hour. And he is losing no blood to hurt. We had better leave him to make his way off the island, as he left you once."

"That's so," said Will, with a momentary return of fury at the recollection.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN TURTLE ISLAND THOROUGHFARE.

HAD the occurrences of our last chapter taken place later they might have been interfered with from another source than the boats of stray fishermen. For as soon as night fell a long narrow boat put out from the inlet back of Beach City, manned by six stout oarsmen, and an equally stout coxswain, who was no other than our old friend, Harry Bains.

For a week now they had been nightly patrolling the inlet, between Turtle Island and the swamps. The Mary Ann, with her contraband goods, might be looked for at any moment, and they were determined to be not cheated of their prey as they had been on a former occasion.

This patrol was supplemented by a single guard on the high lands back of the swamp. From the inlet it would have been impossible to see the lights of a vessel beyond the island. A guard was therefore placed in a house on the mainland, from whose upper windows a clear view of any passing sail was visible.

The boat of the patrol moved slowly up and down the inlet. Keeping to its center to avoid the pest of the mosquitoes, and rowing with a long, easy stroke, just sufficient to keep the craft in motion and the men awake.

Hour after hour passed in this eventless and tiresome task. It was past twelve o'clock when Harry, with a sweep of the helm, brought the boat's prow around, and headed her again down the inlet.

Just then a low, whistling sound came across the water from the swamp.

Every voice was hushed, and the oars held suspended. Again it came, three notes, in a falling cadence.

Harry Bains answered with the same signal. The next instant the sound of oars met their ears, and a small boat, rowed by a single oarsman, was visible emerging from the gloomy borders of the swamp, and rapidly approaching.

"Is it you, Tim?" called Harry, in a low, guarded tone.

"Ay, ay!" came in the same cautious utterance.

"Ready and anxious to work?" asked the rower, as the small boat forged up beside the large one.

"Yes. What is up?"

"The signal has been shown off the coast. Three lights in a triangle. It was answered by Bill Bates, the fisherman, with the same signal, which you might have seen if your eyes had been wide open."

"We trusted to your eyes for that," rejoined Harry.

"Well, Bates is off. I saw him safe on the water, and then made for my own boat. I had some trouble to find you, so he has had plenty of time to reach the inlet."

"Lay to, lads!" cried Harry, with sudden vehemence. "We will make for the thoroughfare."

In twenty minutes they were off the mouth of the thoroughfare, patrolling on the marsh side, in the shadows of the long grass. Their boat could not have been seen at twenty feet distance, in the dim light of the stars.

Tim rowed across to the island side, where he brought his boat to rest in full view of the mouth of the passage, though himself concealed from easy observation. It was the same channel by whose side Fred Halyard had been left to the slow influx of the tide.

From his position he could hear sounds which appeared to come from the middle of the island. Low, dragging sounds and subdued voices.

For another twenty minutes the patient vigil continued, and then the dip of oars became audible. The prow of a large boat emerged from the mouth of the channel before the eyes of the patient guard."

In a moment more the whole boat was visible, setting in the water as if heavily loaded, and rowed by three men. Tim let it get well out into the open water, and then cautiously followed, with a noiseless stroke of his oars.

Tim, at his distance, could but just see what followed—the sudden upleaping of a number of phantom-like forms, a writhing and whirling of these figures, and then a sudden disappearance as if they were all crouched down in the boats. An oath, an ejaculation, a cry followed, but these were instantly suppressed.

Tim rowed hastily up.

"What luck?" he asked.

"Nabbed," came in the voice of Harry Bains. "A regular piece of machine work. There they are, with hard wood to chew on. And a glorious boat-load of the contraband."

"Will we make for the city," asked Tim.

"No. I doubt if this is all. We shall have to question our friend Bates."

The gag was taken from the fisherman's mouth, but he sullenly refused to answer any questions, either as to whether there was more goods to come in, or as to any signal by which the smugglers could be deceived. Harry offered him his liberty if he would tell on his confederates, but not a word could be got from him.

"Best lock his jaw again," exclaimed one of the men, impatiently. "These other chaps look like sailors. We might learn something by pumping them."

"Hold!" cried Tim, with a sudden recollection. "Wait for me. I will be back in ten minutes."

He rowed off hastily across the inlet. He had just remembered the reply, from the island, to his whistle. It might mean something of importance.

The others waited in restless impatience for his return. They could not imagine his object. But the ten minutes were not up ere the sound of oars was again audible, and his boat slowly emerged from the gloom—this time with two occupants.

"Who in thunder have you there?" asked Harry, in deep surprise.

"Only a night-hawk, who has been at fly-catching on Turtle Island," came in the well-known voice of Fred Halyard.

As the boat came alongside he stepped into the larger craft of the patrol.

"I thought you might be wanting your spare coxswain," he said.

"What in blazes does this mean, Fred?" asked Harry. "How came you you on the island?"

"It is a long story," replied the lad, "which this is not the time to tell. I can give you this much of it, though. Two friends of mine tried a little game of murder on me, and if they'd hit ten times harder I am afraid it would have been the last of Fred Halyard."

"Murder!" cried Harry. "You are not joking, boy?"

"I don't think this cut is a joke," replied Fred, touching his matted hair. "They left the tide to finish their work, but their calculation wasn't just up to the mark. I crawled up into the bushes and laid there till my strength came back to me again."

"Well! if this ain't a sweet go!" ejaculated Harry with a whistle of astonishment. "Do you know anything of the business we are on?"

"You bet I do. Why it all came off not ten feet from me. The boat from the Mary Ann will be back inside of half an hour with another load of contraband goods."

"That's the ticket!" cried Harry, jubilantly. "You're a brick, Fred."

"The captain and mate of the Triton are aboard. They don't trust this delicate business to the sailors. There's a signal; but I've nabbed it."

"To your oars, lads," exclaimed Harry. "You stay here, Tim, and watch our prisoners. Knock them in the head if they are obstreperous. Lay to, now. You're a perfect brick, Fred."

In their inward passage Fred unfolded his plan. This was to ambush the smugglers, only three remaining aboard the boat, while the others should hide in the bushes, ready to spring up at a given word.

All this was performed ere the smugglers' boat returned with its second cargo. The craft of the coast-guard lay, with its three occupants, awaiting their approach.

A password was called out from the approaching boat, and answered by Fred, when they dashed confidently in.

"You are spry," called out the voice of Captain Carstairs. "I did not look for you so soon."

"Yes, willing hands and ready oars, you know, Cap."

By this time the boats were almost touching.

"Hallo!" cried the captain. "Whose voice is that?"

"Only a night-hawk's cr ,," came the loud answer.

It was the signal agreed upon. In an instant the men concealed in the bushes were on their feet and dashing for the smugglers' boat. They were as quickly seconded by the occupants of the patrol boat.

The surprise was complete. In less than a minute the three sailors who occupied the boat were overcome and secured, while the captain and mate had their hands much fuller of work than they had bargained for.

The captain was dragged backward by two stalwart assailants, and his arms bound behind him ere he could make any effort at self-defense. The mate, however, was more fortunate. He knocked down his first foe by a blow from his iron-like fist. The next instant he had drawn a pistol, and was menacing the assailants.

"This for you!" he yelled, pulling the trigger on Harry Bains.

But ere the pistol could be discharged his aim was disconcerted by a fierce blow which fell upon his head and hurled him forward into the mass of his foes. In an instant more he was secured beyond the chance of a struggle.

"I owed you one," exclaimed Fred, flinging down the tiller by which he had produced this sudden change in affairs. "And I thought it a good time to pay it now and save Harry Bains from the clip of a pistol ball."

"You're just the biggest brick going!" cried Harry, grasping his hand. "I owe you one now."

"And if we haven't made a pull to-night, then there's no mosquitoes on Turtle Island. I'm afraid the Mary Ann will have to run into port without her head officers, except they call round our way for them. Ready, lads?"

"Ay, ay!"

"Then give way."

In very few minutes more the procession of captured and captors was moving down the inlet, toward Beach City.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A CONFESSION SWEET.

A WEEK or two has passed since the date of our last chapter, a period rather fruitful in important results to several of our characters. Captain Cartairs, and Miller, his mate, Bates, the fisherman, and half a dozen of the crew of the Mary Ann, are in prison on the charge of defrauding the revenue. Their employers, Messrs. Tompkins, Son & Co., are also in the hands of the law, being free upon bail to answer for their misdeeds, on the principle that the big fish can swim, while the little fish must be kept safely under lock and key.

Jim Bundy is also in what we may call a tight place, though he has a fair prospect of being released on bail, under the auspices of some of the thirsty folks of Crockettstown. We may offer this in evidence that there is some gain in selling gool ale.

As for the Mary Ann, she lay off and on the coast on the night of the capture, in despair at the loss of her officers. The crew, of course, were not without suspicion of the nature of this enterprise, and not without conjectures as to what had befallen their commander. But the orders were to await their return, which was accordingly done.

With fair daybreak a boat put off and came out to her manned by four of the coast-guard, with Fred Halyard in command. Young as he was, he knew how to handle a vessel, which could be said of none of the others, except Harry Bains. But the latter had his hands full just now in Beach City, so that Fred, despite his wound, and a dizziness yet remaining from it, was appointed to take charge of the Mary Ann, and bring her into New York Harbor.

Meanwhile Amos Yarnall and his son were about prepared to leave Beach City. The former was quite satisfied that Mr. Darlington's defiance was but bravado, since he certainly could place no trust in the lapsed memory of Jim Bundy, and had no other evidence. And as he showed no signs of yielding to the demand of Mr. Yarnall, the latter had about concluded to bring suit for the recovery of the estate, being convinced that no strong defense could be made.

He had another reason for this action. He had every right to believe that the heir on whom Mr. Darlington depended to checkmate him was no longer in the way. His operations of the previous day had certainly given him reason to believe that this obstacle was removed; and it struck him that it might be the part of prudence to leave Beach City without delay, as some unpleasant discovery might possibly be made. He had not the most remote idea that, at that very moment, Fred Halyard, alive and strong, was giving orders to make sail on the Mary Ann and head her for New York and a harbor—which was certainly much better than to be "food for fishes."

There was much excited talk at the depot, as he was waiting for car time to arrive. With eager interest he mingled with one of the conversing groups, anxious to learn the cause of this unusual excitement—a little fearful, also, in his fumost soul.

"It was the neatest job that was ever put up in these diggings," declared one enthusiastic individual. "And they say the haul was worth thousands. All the finest French silks."

"What is it?" asked Mr. Yarnall.

Here was an opportunity—a person ignorant of the news. There was a fine chance to repeat the whole exciting story.

Mr. Yarnall soon learned of the capture of a party of smugglers during the preceding night, with some astonishing particulars of the fight in which they were captured. These particulars, in fact, lost no piquancy from the slight circumstance that they had never occurred. This, really, only left more scope for the imagination in their description.

"Who is the boy of whom you have several times spoken?" asked Mr. Yarnall, somewhat nervously. "You are making him a very prominent character."

"Didn't I tell you? Why, it was Fred Halyard, one of our own Beach City stock. Some devils tried to murder him last night on the islands, but Fred is too tough built to be easy—"

"One moment," remarked a stern faced man who had just come up. "Is not your name Amos Yarnall?"

"That is my name," was the reply, given with outward boldness and inward dread.

"Then you are my prisoner."

"For what?" demanded Mr. Yarnall, with well-assumed astonishment.

"For assault and battery, with intent to kill, on Frederick Halyard. Your accomplice has just been arrested, and I should advise you to come quietly along, if you wish to avoid trouble."

Yarnall looked nervously around, with trembling lips and a face yet more pallid than its normal state. He did not at all like the aspect of the faces about him. And there were words of threat very audible to his senses.

The alert officer hastened to remove his prisoner before this feeling could spread, being well aware of the rapid growth of disorder. In less than an hour Amos Yarnall found himself locked up in prison instead of on his way to Philadelphia. The same prison held Will Howard, it being not considered best to give them a hearing until the excitement had subsided.

Mr. Darlington was exceedingly interested in these events. They had, in fact, more personal bearing on his own affairs than at first sight would have appeared. For Jack Bunce was back in Beach City with some interesting information. This went

to show that Amos Yarnall had been wrong in his deductions concerning Jim Bundy. The latter's lost memory, under Jack's coaching, had really returned to a considerable extent, all the prominent events of his previous life being again in his memory.

And among the recollections which he had divulged to Jack was one of prime importance. This was that Jack Miller, the mate of the Triton, had been appointed mate of the Monsoon, and had been removed at the last minute for other duty. He knew well all the crew of the wrecked vessel, and would be able to identify the wreck with the Monsoon from his knowledge of the fact that Bundy had been one of her crew.

It was, in short, his accidental discovery of an old shipmate, Ned Thompson, now sailing under the name of Jim Bundy in the Crockettstown Hotel, which had first revealed the true fate of the Monsoon.

Rose Darlington, in these days, was in unusually good spirits. So much so, indeed, as to excite the surprise of her father. She had heard, with indignation, of the dastardly attempt on Fred's life.

"I do not understand you lately, Rose," said her father to her one day, as she came suddenly into his parlor, her face radiant her eyes dancing with a joyous light. "Here is your lover in prison, and you as gay as a butterfly."

"He is not my lover any more, father," rejoined Rose, seating herself beside him, and clasping his hand in both hers.

"I thought so," he replied.

"There are better left," exclaimed Rose, with a laugh that held as much indignation as joy.

"You don't mean to say that you have another lover, Rose?"

Rose's head lowered still more, until he was unable to see her blushing face.

"Yes. He is good, and honest, and I know he loves me dearly."

"Who is it?" he asked, with a sudden dread.

"He is one of nature's gentlemen, and—he is here!"

She threw open the door and ran out. In an instant she returned, her hand clasped in that of Fred Halyard, who bore his usual erect attitude and look of self-trust, though his eyes were downcast, and he held back somewhat from her impetuous movement.

"He is here, papa! It is Fred Halyard, to whom I owe my life."

This was spoken with an enforced enthusiasm. Rose was very uncertain of her father's reception of this announcement. Her eyes, too, dropped, and the pair stood before Mr. Darlington, like criminals awaiting sentence.

"I would never have spoken to Rose in this way," remarked Fred, earnestly, but without lifting his eyes, "but that she told me she was poor like myself. Of course, I know that I can never be her equal in any other way."

A slight pressure from the hand that held his answered this.

If they had looked into Mr. Darlington's face their suspense might have been sooner ended. Its first show of deep surprise was followed by a flush in which hope and joy were clearly mingled. To their utter astonishment he rose from his chair, and clasped them both in his arms.

"She is yours, Fred, and I am glad enough it is you. You don't know what trouble you have saved me, Rose. And as for the lost fortune, it has not floated away so far but that it may return."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE WINDING UP.

OUR story is told. There remain but the loose threads of our work to gather up. It will not be very difficult for the reader to guess the cause of Mr. Darlington's approbation of Fred Halyard's

suit, although his enthusiastic manner had very agreeably astonished that young man himself.

Certainly Mr. Darlington's design of handing over his property to its true heir was rendered a more pleasant ceremony by the discovery of the relations between Fred and his daughter.

Meanwhile the course of justice moved on, slowly but surely.

The prosecution against Amos Yarnall and Wilbur Howard resulted in a verdict of three months' imprisonment against Amos Yarnall, to whom Fred imputed his wound, while he exonerated Will by testifying that they had been engaged in a fair hand-to-hand wrestle, and that he did not believe Will meant him any personal harm.

In the trial of smugglers, only the members of the firm of Tompkins, Son & Co., the captain and mate of the smuggler, and the fisherman, Bates, were prosecuted with any earnestness. It was easily seen that the sailors, and the driver of the wagon, were not parties to the illegal venture. And as for Jim Bundy, he was cleared of any criminal complicity by the testimony of the mate, who declared that Jim was ignorant of the character of the goods intrusted to his care.

Against the direct participants in the crime the Government pursued a vigorous prosecution, being determined to break up the nest of smugglers who had so long evaded all efforts at discovery. Mr. Proctor gained great praise for his energetic efforts to discover their haunts, but the enthusiastic sympathy of the court went out toward Fred Halyard, whose modest account of his part in the affair of the capture seemed as interesting as a romance.

We will not dwell further on this trial, which, though of importance to the country, is a matter of secondary interest to us. It will suffice to say that the accused were all convicted and punished to the extent of the law.

Fred Halyard was certainly surprised, and old Tom was overwhelmed, on learning that the patrimony of the Ocean Waif was well known, and that he was the true heir to the very large property held by Mr. Darlington.

This matter, in fact, was virtually proved ere any legal steps were taken to establish it.

But the most important evidence was that of Bundy or Thompson himself. His memory had returned sufficiently for him to distinctly identify the child who had come ashore with him as the son of George Bruce, the only passenger of the Monsoon.

And old Tom Halyard was sufficient evidence for the identification of his adopted son, Fred, with this child.

Fred took advantage of the years of probation to obtain some more extended schooling than was to be had at Beach City, and with his application, and quickness of perception, he left college with a very fair scholarship, and with a polish of manner that had been scarcely obtainable in his life between sand and water at Beach City.

But several years have passed since then, and the long-deferred wedding is now an event of a year or two in the past. But if there is a happier couple to be anywhere found in their honeymoon than Fred the Ocean Waif, and Rose, we should like to see them, that's all. And if there's a happier old sail, or than Tom Halyard, in his cabin-like residence adjoining Fred's sea-side cottage, we should like amazingly to have some one point him out to us.

THE END.

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